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# "Functional yet feminine": The gendered image of the American servicewoman in World War II

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“Functional yet Feminine”:  
The Gendered Image of the American Servicewoman in World War II

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A Project Presented to  
the Faculty of the Undergraduate  
College of Arts and Letters  
James Madison University

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

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by Suzanne Claire Wilson

May 2014

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Accepted by the faculty of the Department of History, James Madison University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts.

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## **Introduction**

The creation of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps in 1942 marked the takeover of the United States military by immoral prostitutes and butch lesbians. Such notions permeated the public reaction to the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps, later renamed the Women's Army Corps (WAC), during World War II. The Women's Army Corps along with the other female branches of the American military, stirred up much consternation in the American public and brought to the forefront a nationwide discourse on what constituted appropriate gender roles. Women in the military broke conventional gender norms, sending Americans into a panic that the "services" these young women provided also challenged traditional morality. Assuming the worst, the public doubted these soldiers' moral character and legitimacy. To combat such allegations, popular magazines, newspapers, and military-sponsored propaganda overemphasized the fact that the female soldiers still retained their traditional femininity. The addition of women to the military deviated from America's traditional values of female domesticity, giving the public a predisposition for negative bias. In order for the military to gain and maintain public support, it utilized recruitment advertisements and brochures to prove to the public that the servicewomen functioned effectively within a masculine context, but also retained their femininity and morality. With gender roles shifting in American society, the popular media, such as newspapers and magazines, provided space for the exchange of information and criticism about the female branches, which allowed citizens to form their own opinions concerning the new female soldiers.

After Pearl Harbor, the United States plunged full force into a total war, requiring the American people to pool all available resources together to bolster the war effort. In December 1941, Congresswoman Edith Rogers proposed the WAAC bill, creating the first officially sanctioned women's branch of the United States military. Nevertheless, World War II was not

the first time women had taken part in military conflict. Although their presence was scattered, from the legendary Molly Pitcher's heroism during the American Revolution to the Yeomen (F) from World War I, women were no strangers to military conflict. The Army and Navy both had nurse corps that served in past wars. However, these women never received official military status or benefits, making Rogers' proposal a daring suggestion that would challenge Congress and the nation. Females working with the military prior to World War II received no military protection and enjoyed none of the benefits or perks that the military awarded men. After observing the pitiful treatment of the women serving in World War I, Rogers "resolved that our women would not again serve with the Army without the protection men got." World War II marked the first time that the military granted women "equal" military status and the military had to decide just how that definition of equality, full or partial, would be applied to the female ranks of the military.<sup>1</sup>

Women's entrance into the military contradicted traditional norms of female behavior. Tradition held that the appropriate place for a woman was in the home with her family. Only absolute necessity could justify asking women to leave their homes. After considerable debate and contention, President Franklin Roosevelt signed the WAAC bill on May 15, 1942, establishing the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps. Congresswoman Rogers succeeded in her fight to legitimize and provide pay and benefits for the women in the military. Soon after the Corps' creation, the Army chose Oveta Culp Hobby as director of the WAAC. Planning began immediately and on July 20, 1942, the first group of 440 officer candidates arrived at Fort Des

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<sup>1</sup>Evelyn M. Monahan and Rosemary Neidel-Greenlee, *A Few Good Women: America's Military Women from World War I to the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), xvi, 5-6, 11-15; Judith Bellafaire, "The Woman's Auxiliary Army Corps," in *The Women's Army Corps: A Commemoration of World War II Service* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1993), <http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/WAC/WAC.HTzM> (accessed October 8, 2013); Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers as quoted in Mattie E. Treadwell, *The Women's Army Corps* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History Department of the Army, 1954), 17.

Moines to begin training. However, the WAAC bill had only created an auxiliary branch of the military. The WAAC did not gain full military status until July 3, 1943, when the WAC bill transformed the WAAC into the Women's Army Corps. After the switch to full military status, the female soldiers chose to either enlist in the military or accept an honorable discharge, most likely because some who had signed up for the WAAC might not want to transition to a more authentic military lifestyle. The sudden, radical change of gender norms concerning the proper place of a woman, led to the public's confusion and negative attitude towards the Wacs.<sup>2</sup>

Soon after, on July 31, 1942, additional legislation created the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES), the female branch of the Navy. Unlike their counterparts, the WAAC, the WAVES were never an auxiliary branch and Congress granted the institution full military status from the beginning. Mildred McAfee, president of Wellesley College, became the leader of the newly formed WAVES. Although the WAVES achieved military status immediately, it took longer for the Navy to promote its leader to a military rank suitable for her position, as McAfee was not elevated to the rank of Captain until November 1943. Mattie Treadwell, a high ranking officer in both the WAAC and WAC, argues in her history, *The Women's Army Corps*, that the WAVES experienced relatively little trouble getting Congressional approval and military status because the WAAC had already blazed the trail for direct female involvement in the military and thus took the brunt of the criticism. Little did the public know, the WAVES would pave the way for the creation of two other female branches of the military.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Treadwell, *The Women's Army Corps*, 28-29, 219-229; Bellafaire, *The Woman's Army Corps*.

<sup>3</sup>Nancy Wilson Ross, *The WAVES: The Story of the Girls in Blue* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1943), 1-3; Jean Ebbert and Marie-Beth Hall, "WAVES: Navy Women's Reserve," in *In Defense of a Nation: Servicewomen in World War II*, ed. Jeanne M. Holm and Judith Bellafaire (Arlington, VA: Vandamere Press, 1998), 58; Treadwell, *The Women's Army Corps*, 44.

On November 23, 1942, the legislation concerning the Coast Guard Reserve was amended to create the Women's Reserve of the Coast Guard. Since the Coast Guard in times of war reports to the Navy, the Women's Reserve of the Coast Guard and the WAVES developed alongside each other, training together and sharing a uniform. Lt. Dorothy Stratton ascended from the officers' ranks of the WAVES, earned the rank of Captain, and assumed the position of director. The nickname decided upon was the SPARs because it represented the motto of the Coast Guard, "Semper Paratus, Always Ready." The nickname appropriately had ties to nautical vocabulary, and, as Capt. Stratton noted, it also represented the four freedoms, "Speech, Press, Assembly, Religion" that American democracy espoused.<sup>4</sup>

Last but not least, the United States Marine Corps Women's Reserve was established under the WAVE bill; however, the Marines put up considerable resistance to a female branch joining their ranks, finally conceding on November 7, 1942. General Holcomb, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, expressed that he was strongly "opposed to the formation of a women's reserve," a sentiment his colleagues shared, which resulted in the Lady Marines arguably facing the most discrimination out of the newly formed female branches of the military. Similar to the Marines' rejection of female soldiers based on gender norms, the Marines demonstrated a discriminatory attitude toward race since black women were not allowed to enlist in the Marines until after World War II had concluded in 1949. On January 29, 1943, the Marines commissioned Ruth Cheney Streeter as a Major to lead the Women's Reserve. Unlike their military counterparts, the WAACS, WAVES, and SPARS, the Marines did not receive a cute or catchy nickname or acronym. As General Holcomb told *Life* magazine, "They are *Marines*. They

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<sup>4</sup>United States Coast Guard, *The Coast Guard at War: Women's Reserve* (Washington DC: Historical Section, Public Information Division, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, 1946), 5; According to Gershom Bradford, *A Glossary of Sea Terms* (New York: Dodd, Meade, and Company, 1946), 177. The word Spars is "a term applied to all masts, yards, gaffs, booms, etc." So essentially, they hold the sails in place on a ship.



don't have a nickname and they don't need one." The Marines made it clear that should women join the service, the military expected them to uphold the fierce loyalty and patriotism associated with male Marines.<sup>5</sup>

In order to track the evolution of the fledgling female branches, official military publications concerning the servicewomen serve as important primary and secondary sources. The military kept its own records about the early stages of the new female branches and these records provide valuable context for the creation and operations of the female branches. Government documents, official military histories, and military-sponsored publications consist of the bulk of source material scholars have used to analyze representations of servicewomen to the general public. Mattie Treadwell's *The Women's Army Corps*, published soon after the war in 1954, marks the most notable. This 841-page tome details virtually the entire existence and dealings of the WAC during World War II. Most of the scholarship available on the WAC relies heavily on Treadwell's extensive description.<sup>6</sup> This volume, however, does not provide much analysis; it only presents the facts in chronological order. This is a common theme in many of the military histories. Judith Bellafaire's *The Women's Army Corps: A Commemoration of World War II Service* also presents a fairly dry factual account of the WAC. Similar styles of reporting are also found in Pat Meid's *Marine Corps Women's Reserve in World War II* and in Mary Stremlow's *Free a Marine to Fight: Women Marines in World War II*. The Coast Guard did not even seek out an individual author for the history *The Coast Guard at War: Women's Reserve*, but chose to publish it as a collective organization. Although these accounts provide a wealth of

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<sup>5</sup>Mary V. Stremlow, *Free a Marine to Fight: Women Marines in World War II*, Marines in World War II Commemorative Series (Washington DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1994), 2-3; Peter A. Soderbergh, *Women Marines: The World War II Era* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1994), 18, 20-21; "Women Marines," *Life*, March 27, 1944, 81.

<sup>6</sup>Secondary sources that cite Treadwell include, Bellafaire, *The Women's Army Corps* and Leisa D. Meyer, *Creating G.I. Jane: Sexuality and Power in the Women's Army Corps during World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

information that would otherwise be locked away in some filing cabinet perhaps inaccessible to the civilians, the military has an active role in both publishing and supervising the information presented about the different branches. All of the above authors also served in their respective branches, creating an element of bias, despite the lack of formal analysis.<sup>7</sup>

Further secondary scholarship takes the factual military accounts and interprets the information in the form of a narrative. In Rosemary Neidel-Greenlee and Jeanne Holm's edited work, *In Defense of a Nation: Servicewomen in World War II*, chapters delve into each of the various women's branches. The majority of the authors of the individual chapters are veterans, allowing them to interpret the factual military holdings and incorporate them into their own personal experiences. The authors in these chapters provide a more condensed overview of the branches than the authors of the official military histories, since the purpose of this monograph is not intended for military use but for scholarly edification. This allows for greater interpretation of the facts, but also leaves room for greater personal bias. The authors' impressions of their military service are for the most part positive and many of them found the addition of women in the military invaluable to the war effort.<sup>8</sup>

Although his analysis focuses on a later time period, H. Gelfand's book, *Sea Change at Annapolis: The United States Naval Academy, 1949-2000*, looks at the social changes affecting the transition of admitting women and people of color into the Naval Academy. Gelfand argues that over time, the Academy evolved to incorporate some elements of modern society, such as the use of the television in recruitment efforts, more readily than other societal changes. He asserts that the addition of women into the military setting proved challenging and full

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<sup>7</sup>Treadwell, *The Women's Army Corps*; Bellafaire, *The Women's Army Corps*; Pat Meid, *Marine Corps Women's Reserve in World War II* (Washington DC: Historical Branch, G-3 Division Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1968); Stremlow, *Free a Marine to Fight*; United States Coast Guard, *The Coast Guard at War: Women's Reserve*.

<sup>8</sup>Jeanne M. Holm and Judith Bellafaire, eds. *In Defense of a Nation*.

acceptance of women within the military setting has not yet been accomplished. He largely draws his primary source material concerning women entering the Academy from interviews as well as participation within student groups at the Academy. This research supports Gelfand's findings by giving a historical background of female military service. Understanding the early struggles female soldiers faced can help shed light on the difficulties female midshipmen found when entering the military environment of the U.S. Naval Academy.<sup>9</sup>

Scholarly historian Leisa Meyer's *Creating G.I. Jane: Sexuality and Power in the Women's Army Corps* assesses the unrealistic dual expectations placed upon the servicewomen of World War II. This paper expands upon her existing feminist analysis of the public's responses to women in the military, and upon her interpretation of the military's public messages. Meyer argues that Wacs' "attempts to shape their own military experience sometimes challenged and other times reinforced the very racial, sexual, and gender norms used to proscribe, as well as support, their participation in the armed forces." Meyer clearly addresses the controversy of creating a female sector of the service. She also examines fear that this new role for women would undermine the accepted societal gender roles. Meyer asserts that the public and the media interpreted female agency and the assumption of male roles served as indicators of female sexual deviance, based on the existing gender and sexual hierarchies. She also analyzes the policies the WAC employed to regulate the Wacs' sexuality, as the military attempted to equate female sexual restraint and appropriate behavior with legitimacy for the Corps. Throughout the book, Meyer draws attention to the differences between the male and female roles as a soldier, exposing the double standards of treatment and experience. Meyer's research includes a plethora of various sources, including government and other organizational

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<sup>9</sup>H. Michael Gelfand, *Sea Change at Annapolis: The United States Naval Academy, 1949-2000* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 109-113, 213, 221.

records, oral histories, and the popular press. The arguments of this thesis are inspired by Meyer's work and support her evaluation of the experience of Wacs. However, this thesis expands beyond the WAC to include the other female branches of service. Meyer's analysis focuses heavily on military regulation of servicewomen's sexuality, and on servicewomen's responses to these restrictions. Meyer also assesses the experiences of African-American women in the World War II military, as they faced unique restrictions, and as they protested racism.<sup>10</sup>

While Meyer focuses heavily on military policy, the primary source material of this thesis delves more deeply into visual representations, a subset of Leisa Meyer's primary source evidence. This thesis also uses a number of corporate advertisements printed in the popular press of the time. These depictions reflect the double standard military women faced as military propaganda and popular publications struggled to reconcile the roles of woman and of soldier. This thesis also pays specific attention to the uniforms of the servicewoman and the powerful symbol they became, both to the servicewomen through military literature, but to the general public through the popular press as well.<sup>11</sup>

The popular media, such as newspapers, magazines, and military propaganda, provided a vehicle for the military to assert the compatibility of women in the military and to present the image of the ideal female soldier. Recruiting brochures give insight into the way that the military represented its model female recruit, professional yet still feminine. For example, the 1943 recruitment brochure, *Facts About Spars*, asserts that SPARS are "among the best dressed women in this nation at war" due to their "military but feminine navy blue uniforms." This dual image of the woman both breaking traditional gender norms and retaining feminine characteristics, such as a concern for fashion, illustrates how the military wanted the public to

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<sup>10</sup>Meyer, *Creating G.I. Jane*, 10.

<sup>11</sup>Meyer, *Creating G.I. Jane*, 10.

see their female soldiers. Emphasizing womanliness attempted to ease both the public and potential recruits' qualms with women entering a predominantly masculine sphere on a large scale. The military made great use of the various uniforms to achieve this goal, which will be discussed in chapter two of this thesis.<sup>12</sup>

From the start, the notable change in military policy of utilizing women in the armed forces attracted substantial media attention. Historian Leila Rupp in her book, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American War Propaganda, 1939-1945*, points out that the ubiquitous woman in uniform within the popular media created a sense of excitement and glamour, which aided in military recruitment. An article in *The New York Times* announced the government's use of advertising to recruit women for the WAAC. Propaganda constitutes a portion of the source material for this thesis, similar to the source material Rupp used; however, this thesis focuses only on American women in the military and not war propaganda as a whole. Although the servicewoman within advertising did possess some glamorous appeal, this thesis focuses on the ways the advertisements presented the gender roles of servicewomen to the public. The portrayal of military women in uniform within the popular media allowed for the image of the military woman to be presented to the public.<sup>13</sup>

This thesis analyzes a number of popular magazines, such as *Life*, *Collier's Weekly*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and *Ladies' Home Journal* for representations of military women. The research conducted included a thorough page-by-page examination of both *Collier's Weekly* and *Ladies' Home Journal* from the years 1942-1945. These volumes present a wide variety of representations, including articles, comics, corporate advertisements, and recruitment ads.

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<sup>12</sup>United States Coast Guard, *Facts About Spars* (Washington DC: U.S. Coast Guard, 1943), 6.

<sup>13</sup>Leila Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939-1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 143; "Ads Used to Recruit WAAC," *The New York Times*, November 29, 1942, 9, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/106257990?accountid=11667> (accessed February 20, 2014).

Comics, in particular, use humor as a way to offset anxiety, in this case regarding the role of females in the military. Comics attracted military attention during the war regarding the messages they sent to the public. “The Fighting Funnies,” a 1944 article in *Collier’s Weekly* asserted, “The power of comic strips over American citizens both large and small has left our admirals and generals in a state of startled gratitude.” This of course referred to comics that supported the war effort; however, military personnel also expressed concern over negative messages “getting the war effort mixed up.” The fact that the military noticed the power of comics and their influence over the public marks their value as primary sources. Popular media, including newspapers, create a window into public opinion. Letters to the editor, advice columns, and opinion pieces all provide insight into how the public felt about the female soldiers. Of course, these sources also contain bias. Often times the responsibility of what to print rested on the editor, so it cannot be guaranteed that newspapers and magazines were accurately reporting all facets of the public opinion. As representations of servicewomen became more commonplace, the femininity of the women in question became a public issue through the media. Often media coverage was divided, polarizing those who supported women in the military and those who thought they challenged tradition.<sup>14</sup>

It is also important to note that the overwhelming majority of the women in these media representations were white. The popular press and advertisements only featured images of African American servicewomen extremely rarely if not at all. In order to find representations of African American women within the service, one must turn to African American publications, such as the *Chicago Defender*. Although this thesis does not heavily address racial issues within

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<sup>14</sup>J. Clarke Mattimore and Hannibal Coons, “The Fighting Funnies,” *Collier’s Weekly*, January 29, 1944, 24.

the military, it is important to keep in mind that representations of servicewomen did not only carry connotations pertaining to gender, but to race as well.

The chapters of this thesis analyze the depictions of military women. Chapter 1 discusses how women fell into the dual role of both challenging the traditional gender norms through their military service, yet upholding them largely in the jobs they performed within the military. The military was aware that it would receive criticism for involving women so it took pains to assign women to jobs it deemed “appropriate” for women, which were similar to the careers women had slowly begun to adopt within the civilian sphere. Restrictions also prevented the service of women who had traditional responsibilities, such as motherhood, and prohibited women from claiming men as dependents, which would “falsely” assert female dominance in a marriage relationship. To be both a wife and the provider within the relationship seemed incompatible with traditional gender roles. Likewise, never before had a soldier also been a mother, a concept that the military had to make allowances for, adjusting its policies so as not to interfere with a woman’s role as a mother.<sup>15</sup>

Chapter 2 will discuss the military’s most powerful recruiting tool, the uniform. The military hyped the female uniforms in the media and accentuated them in many recruitment endeavors. A “fashionable” uniform was a way to attract recruits. The uniform also symbolized the dichotomous nature of service examined in Chapter 1, forcing women to appear just feminine enough to discount fears of women overstepping their bounds, but also masculine enough to create a sense of legitimacy and professionalism. The female versions of the uniforms bore enough resemblance to their male counterparts to blend into the military environment, yet they had definite feminine elements such as “a flattering, six-gore skirt,” high heels, and a “soft

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<sup>15</sup>Jeanette F. Lissey and Edith Harvey, eds., *Prepare for the Official Tests for Waacs, Waves, Spars, and Marines: A Complete Guide and Instruction Book for Women in Military Service* (New York: Capitol Publishing Company, 1943), 10; “First Women Soldiers Join the Army,” *Life*, September 7, 1942, 74-81.

crowned hat” to preserve the servicewomen’s femininity. Designing a uniform that conformed to military tradition and accommodated the female body, a foreign concept to military regulations, proved a challenging feat.<sup>16</sup>

Chapter 3 discusses mass media depictions of military women’s bodies and sexuality. The popular media capitalized on the notion of a woman, particularly her body within a military context, as “out-of-place” and absurd, which served to harm the legitimacy of the female branches. Often, comics in newspapers and magazines criticized women in the military by making fun of situations where the simple presence of the female body in a military context placed a male officer into an over-dramatized awkward position. For example, a common scenario depicted the male officer perplexed at the obstacle of a woman’s breast when attempting to pin a medal on her chest. Other times, comics overtly sexualized the female soldier’s body or rendered servicewomen as ditsy or incompetent because of their sex.<sup>17</sup>

Chapter 4 will trace the effects of such portrayals on public opinion, tracing shifts over time in popular media discourse. With the introduction of the popular press’s “Slander Campaign,” pioneered through two *Newsweek* articles in 1943, public opinion about the WAC took a turn for the worse. Concerned that these women were behaving inappropriately, rumors began to spread about their morality and femininity in general. Public opinion of the new female branches plummeted. In response, media representations of servicewomen began to overcompensate, over-emphasizing the ideas that these women were not deviants, but regular feminine women serving their country in a noble and groundbreaking way.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>United States Navy, *How to Serve Your Country in the WAVES or the SPARS* (Washington DC: United States Navy, 1943), 8 <http://www.idaillinois.org/cdm/ref/collection/isl3/id/15283> (accessed November 2, 2013).

<sup>17</sup>Corporal Vic Herman, “Winnie the Wac,” *Life*, March 19, 1945, 12.

<sup>18</sup>Treadwell, *The Women’s Army Corps*, 194-195; Meyer, *Creating G.I. Jane*, 33-35.



The debate of women in the military is far from concluded. Today's media features discussions of women in combat as well as the inclusion of homosexuals in the military. This thesis serves to analyze the public reception of a concept that is now, for the most part, generally accepted in society; however, the addition of women to the military was not always welcomed with open arms. As women entered into this male-dominated sphere for the first time in an official capacity, the public had to reconcile with this drastic social change. The military responded to this through its representation of the servicewoman within its recruitment literature. The resulting image of the ideal woman consisted of one who both smoothly adjusted to military life, yet also upheld the traditional expectations of femininity in the jobs she performed, her behavior, and her dress. The military also had to effectively integrate female sexuality into military life in a way that would not alarm the public or challenge traditional morality standards. Ultimately, these efforts failed as a slander campaign captivated the public's attention, fostering negative feelings towards the female branches.

### **“It’s a *People’s* Army Now!”: Reconciling the Female Presence within the Military**

“Remember you are ladies, forget that you are women,” a superior female officer once told soldiers in training. In January 1943, the popular magazine *Ladies’ Home Journal* published this instruction in the feature story “Our Girls in Uniform,” part of the magazine’s recurring section on “How America Lives.” Perfectly indicative of the trend seen in representations of American female soldiers in the media and in military propaganda, this article trod lightly on the subject of gender and women’s appropriate place in society. In order to gain support and approval, the military had to appease the public and reassure that these women were not deviating from the social order for any reason other than necessity. Exhorting recruits to, “Remember you are ladies,” reminded them that they were still expected to perform the social role of the refined, moral exemplar that the public expected of women. Ordering them to “forget that you are women,” encouraged them to leave behind the supposed frailty of their sex, which could not mesh within a military context. It also suggested that to be womanly within the military equated with being flawed.<sup>19</sup>

Even though women took new positions in society some traditional gender order remained. Although these women had been flung into a largely masculine world, the military took special care to assure that they would perform duties suited to their gender. The military also emphasized motherhood both for prospective applicants and for women in uniform, asserting its commitment to the continuation of traditional family structure and roles for women after the war’s conclusion. The image of the servicewoman that the military created consisted of women who could perform in the contexts of both masculinity and femininity. On the one hand, the military portrayed female soldiers as competent and on par professionally with men in order to increase the new female branches’ legitimacy in the eyes of the public. However, it also had to

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<sup>19</sup>“Our Girls in Uniform,” in “How America Lives,” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, January 1943, 67.

remind the public that the soldiers were still feminine at heart. Often times in the military context, it seemed that women in uniform had to exchange their feminine behaviors in order to adopt military habits, although this was not necessarily directly encouraged. The military never explicitly asked women to abandon their femininity, again instructing the servicewomen to “Remember you are ladies.” However, concurrently telling them “forget you are women” suggested that being women and being soldiers simply did not blend. The conflicting pressures on women to conform to both polarized gender roles, maintaining the behaviors that earned “ladies” respect in civilian society, while also adopting the presumably “masculine” traits that brought military success, resulted in confusion as society attempted to figure out the place for these groundbreaking women within the existing social order.<sup>20</sup>

### **Acceptable Roles within a Challenging Situation**

In order for the public to accept and support these women challenging societal norms, the military had to prove that even when these women entered a traditionally masculine sphere of life, they still performed roles within the confines of what was considered appropriate for their gender. However, pressure also existed to incorporate the new soldiers into the strict military structure, which demanded uniformity and therefore some equality between women and men. The military did make it clear that the women chosen for military service would face strikingly similar standards as male soldiers. For example, the military expected women to follow bed check procedures, perform drill exercises flawlessly, and keep their uniforms tidy and clean.<sup>21</sup>

Correspondingly, the military actually maintained some forms of equality between the male and female soldiers. From their inception, the WAVES, SPARS, and Marines offered equal

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<sup>20</sup>“Our Girls in Uniform,” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, 67.

<sup>21</sup>United States Marine Corps, *So Proudly We Serve: U.S. Marine Corps Women’s Reserve*, (Washington D.C.: United States Marine Corps, 1944), 3, <http://www.idaillinois.org/cdm/ref/collection/isl3/id/12528> (accessed March 31, 2014).

pay for equal rank between the two gendered branches. In the 1943 study guide *Prepare for the Official Tests for WAACS, WAVES, SPARS, and Marines*, the section featuring the Marine Corps Women's Reserve boasted "You will actually BE a Marine with the same privileges and obligations as men of corresponding rank." Once the WAC received full military status, the Army granted Wacs equal pay and benefits as well. The military offered all four female branches (after the shift from the WAAC to the WAC) government life insurance "at the same low rate as men" and allowed them to claim dependents. However, the military strictly regulated exactly whom a Wac could claim as a dependent. A Wac could not claim her husband as a dependent and she also could not claim her children as dependents except in the case that the father had died and she had not remarried. Although the military made some attempt at equality between servicemen and servicewomen, policies still favored men and reinforced that a servicewoman was not meant to supersede a man as the provider for the family. However, the military still stressed what equality it offered for women. Recruitment posters highlighted that the WAVES offered "Same Grades Same Pay as for Men." The military's leaders obviously saw this as a draw for young women; otherwise they would not advertise it.<sup>22</sup>

Corporate advertisements also utilized the theme of newfound equality for women within the military to laud servicewomen's commitment to the war effort. A 1944 Tubize Rayon Corporation ad published in *Life* magazine with the approval of the War Advertising Council states that the WAVES, WACS, SPARS, and MARINES were the place for "the women that want to stand shoulder to shoulder with their men in this war." Highlighting the equality between

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<sup>22</sup> Lissey and Harvey, *Prepare for the Official Tests*, 38-39, 67, 71; Women's Army Corps, *A Book of Facts About the WAC*, (Washington DC: United States Army, 1944), 22, <https://archive.org/details/ABookOfFactsAboutTheWac> (accessed November 2, 2013); U.S. Government Accountability Office, B-36497, September 24, 1943, 23 COMP. GEN. 216, <http://www.gao.gov/products/B-36497#mt=e-report> (accessed February 19, 2014); United States Navy, "Women 20 to 36 Earn a Navy Rating: Join the WAVES," recruitment advertisement, 1943, <http://contentdm.mdch.org/u/?mdwp,111> (accessed November 2, 2013).

the male and female soldiers, the military did slightly contradict the socially acceptable positions for male and female soldiers and placed women on an equal professional level with men, which served to heighten servicewomen's legitimacy.<sup>23</sup>

Reports in popular media about the new female soldiers often highlighted people's responses to the women in uniform and typically conveyed a positive impression of the servicewomen from both their female superiors and male counterparts, proving their successful integration into the military and their capability to perform their military duties with equal efficacy to men. An officer in the WAC told *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1943, "These girls of ours can do darn near anything a man can do and usually better." Captain Ruth L. Freeman asserted in a 1944 *Chicago Defender* article, "there are many jobs women can do better than men." The *Chicago Defender* was an African American publication, showing how recruitment rhetoric spanned across racial lines. The support of the female superiors affirmed that these women performed in the military not just adequately, but in many cases better than their male counterparts. Men also testified to the effectiveness of the female branches of the military. George Fissler, a Coast Guard swimming instructor, commented on the Spars' performance saying, "Women are even easier to teach because they work harder." Praising the female soldiers and pointing out their work ethic confirmed that these women excelled in the military lifestyle, despite their gender. Even General Eisenhower stated in 1943 that the Wacs "rank with the best of [his] troops." Such high praise from a high-ranking and well-known military officer only reinforced the viability of the female branches and asserted their competence.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Tubize Rayon Corporation, "Tell Them in Time of War Patriotism is not Enough!" advertisement, *Life*, April 17, 1944, 87, <http://books.google.com/books?id=CFAEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA85&dq=%22spars%22&hl=en&sa=X&ei=Sx8JUquBMo6i4AP27oCYBg&ved=0CDYQ6AEwAjgK#v=onepage&q=%22spars%22&f=false> (accessed February 19, 2014).

<sup>24</sup>"Our Girls in Uniform," *Ladies' Home Journal*, 65; Captain Ruth L. Freeman, "WAC FACTS," *Chicago Defender*, March 25, 1944, 3,

The military, however, could not simply assert how well these women fit into their military roles without raising public concern about these women overstepping the bounds of tradition. The military had to prove that women still conformed to the societal expectations of women. Aside from the progressive nature of including women in the traditionally male dominated military, the female branches tended to uphold traditional gender roles, although definite exceptions, such as female mechanics, also existed. Assignments allowed the majority of women to perform the work considered acceptable in the civilian world, but simply provided a different context of military service. The typical WAC duties consisted primarily of clerical work. Printed in *Collier's Weekly* in 1943, comic artist Jefferson Machamer differentiated Wacs from male members of the military by poking fun at the thought of secretarial work in a military context, calling it a "dangerous assignment." This comic both verified the distinction between female and male duties yet also jested at the idea of these female jobs within a military setting.<sup>25</sup>

Despite Machamer's quip, females provided a vital service to the military. Through the use of women to fill these menial jobs, more men were able to serve in combat positions, allowing for a more streamlined war effort. A 1944 Coast Guard recruitment poster clearly stated, "Your Duty Ashore, His Afloat" drawing clear gender distinction between the types of work that were considered appropriate for both women and men. Clearly defining what the military saw as female jobs as opposed to male jobs asserted the military's commitment to upholding traditional gender roles within a military lifestyle. Making clear distinctions about "appropriate" female positions helped the military to maintain some traditional order between the genders within its ranks. However, emphasizing equality in military benefits and duties

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<http://search.proquest.com/docview/492730970/fulltextPDF/13FD93D90FF381A3586/5?accountid=11667> (accessed November 2, 2013); Ruth Carson, "Spars Afloat," *Collier's Weekly*, August 5, 1944, 22; "Wacs in Africa," *Collier's Weekly*, October 30, 1943, 16.

<sup>25</sup>Lissey and Harvey, *Prepare for the Official Tests*, 10; Jefferson Machamer, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, March 27, 1943, 74.

reaffirmed that these women were indeed military personnel and could fully perform as such. Praising the servicewomen's achievements reassured skeptics that women could perform on par with men, quashing the unfounded fear that perceived female weakness would interfere with the servicewomen's duties. Both strategies of presenting the female soldier as feminine yet competent aimed to show the public that the military cared about the preservation of gendered social norms, but also held the same high expectations it required from its male soldiers. The military created a dual representation of women, trying to both appease public outcry against women stepping out of social bounds while asserting the legitimacy and efficacy of the newly formed female branches.<sup>26</sup>

Many roles within the military that men traditionally held did not necessarily involve combat, which allowed the military to realistically consider women as candidates to fill these positions without upsetting society's accepted gender norms. Secretarial work and other administrative positions proved necessary for the smooth functioning of the military. As the war progressed, demand for more soldiers in combat positions increased, leaving vacancies in many of the military desk jobs. Women already served in these positions in civilian life, allowing the military some social precedent for women assuming these roles.

Recruiters were always very careful to clarify that women were not stealing men's roles within the military but rather helping them to succeed faster. In fact, recruitment ads often portrayed the substitution of women into men's positions as those women doing men a favor. A 1943 recruitment ad printed in *Ladies' Home Journal* illustrated a woman cheerfully offering the "sweet words," "Okay, Soldier, I'll take over!" (See Figure 1) A Waac is pictured shaking hands with a grateful, smiling soldier. The text of the recruitment advertisement asked, "What man

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<sup>26</sup>John Joseph Floherty Jr. and U.S. Coast Guard, "Your Duty Ashore...His Afloat: SPARS," recruitment advertisement, 1944, [http://contentdm.mdch.org/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/mdwp&CISOPTR=113](http://contentdm.mdch.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/mdwp&CISOPTR=113) (accessed December 3, 2013).

wants to sit at a desk when there are planes to fly, tanks that could be tearing toward Victory, machine guns waiting for a steady hand and a cold bead on the Japs and Nazis!” The military insinuated that men favored the context of the battlefield over the desk jobs they held during peacetime. Rather than the woman literally “taking over” his position, she provided a service to the male soldier, allowing him to assume his masculine instinct to fight. The 1944 Marine recruitment brochure, *So Proudly We Serve*, assures that “Marines are fighting men” and through the act of women relieving them of their duties on the home front, they were actually allowing them to take on their natural and preferred roles within the military. In fact, the official slogan of the female Marines was “Free a Man to Fight!” which the Marines printed on recruitment posters, advertisements, and brochures.<sup>27</sup>

The concept that women joined the military to support men asserted their continued traditional role as females. Instead of women accommodating men within the home, they supported men in a new way, making it possible for them to pursue their supposed first and foremost desire of joining the war effort in a combat position. A 1944 Canada Dry advertisement showed male soldiers at a bar looking at pictures of female servicewomen and toasting in gratitude, “To the Ladies!” (See Figure 2) The idea that men actually desired to go overseas to fight and would thank women for allowing them to do so aided the military in presenting the concept of female soldiers as rendering a service to men, allowing them to spin a female military to the public as a way to bolster the traditional masculine war effort.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>United States Army, “Okay, Soldier I’ll Take Over,” recruitment advertisement, *Ladies’ Home Journal*, May 1943, 165; United States Marine Corps, *So Proudly We Serve: U.S. Marine Corps Women’s Reserve*, (Washington D.C.: United States Marine Corps, 1944), 1, <http://www.idaillinois.org/cdm/ref/collection/isl3/id/12528> (accessed November 2, 2013); United States Marine Corps Women’s Reserve, “Be a Marine, Free a Marine to Fight,” recruitment advertisement, 1943, <http://www.idaillinois.org/cdm/ref/collection/isl5/id/133> (accessed November 2, 2013); Stremlow, *Free a Marine to Fight*, 1.

<sup>28</sup>Canada Dry, “To the Ladies!” advertisement, *Collier’s Weekly*, December 9, 1944, 27;



Another way the military upheld traditional gender roles was asserting that the only reason that women were serving in the military was due to absolute necessity. The military did not have any plans at the time for continued female branches post-war and recruitment efforts gave no indications of the possibility of a lasting military career for women. This “necessary evil” only took place because the total war effort demanded more manpower and with a shortage of men, the military turned to the female population. All recruitment brochures made it absolutely clear that women were only enlisted in their branch of service *for the duration of the war*; at most they would be asked to stay six months after conflict had ceased. It did, however, remind potential recruits that the skills acquired in the military could prove useful for women should they choose to pursue a peacetime career. The military hammered the message that women were only required in the military due to the extreme circumstances into the recruitment literature, reassuring the public that this change in gender roles was only temporary and would not be condoned in less dire situations.<sup>29</sup>

### **Confronting Motherhood**

Given the assumption that pure necessity drove women’s involvement in the military, it was generally accepted that once conflict was over the women would return to their husbands and homes. The military made it difficult for a woman to marry within the military. If she married someone from the same branch of service, she would be the one forced to resign. Waves, Spars, and Marines were prohibited from marrying male members of their same branch of service while remaining in the military. It was clear that men took first priority in military service and that if a conflict of interest ensued it was the female who would be removed from her already controversial position. The military was very conscious of the traditional gender roles

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<sup>29</sup>United States Marine Corps, *So Proudly We Serve*, 13; Lisse and Harvey, *Prepare for the Official Tests*, 44.

and made a concentrated effort to remind the female soldiers, their families, and the nation that although these women served in a traditionally male sphere of life, they still retained their femininity and family values.<sup>30</sup>

Army regulations structured female military service to cater to unmarried women without children, reaffirming the importance of women's focus on motherhood. The WAAC did not provide for dependents, making it difficult for a woman with children to enlist while supporting her family. The WAC did not allow women to enlist in the service if they had children under the age of 14. A 1943 recruitment advertisement for the WAAC clearly stated, "If you have children under 14, or other dependents, your place is at home." Declaring a woman's place to be "at home" because of young children showed that the military did not want to come between a mother and her children. Blatantly excluding mothers from consideration within an advertisement purposely designed to implore more women to join the WAAC openly affirmed the military's policy that service in the military was not to interfere with women's primary roles as mothers. Stricter still, Waves, Spars, and Marines could not enlist with children under the age of 18. These policies pledged the military's support of motherhood and the family structure, assuring the public that through the use of female soldiers it was not trying to undermine women's place in the home as a mothers.<sup>31</sup>

Even though military policies prioritized maternal duties over military service, there was an obvious fear in popular media of the absent mother as a result of military service. In 1945, *Collier's Weekly* printed a comic illustrating a Wac coming home from military duty to her husband and her family. When she sees the baby in her husband's arms, she asks, "And who is

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<sup>30</sup>D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 23-27, 43-44.

<sup>31</sup>Lissey and Harvey, *Prepare for the Official Tests*, 13, 42, 69; United States Marine Corps, *So Proudly We Serve*, 27; United States Army, "Okay, Soldier I'll Take Over."

this?” Of course, the idea that a woman would return home to a child she had not seen before was absurd at best. Obviously, a mother would be well aware of giving birth to a child, but this comic played off of the biological fact that it was possible for a man to leave a pregnant wife and return to a new child.<sup>32</sup>

To avoid blame that the military enabled women to ignore familial duties, the military attempted to regulate media depiction of wartime service’s effect on motherhood. An article in *Collier’s Weekly* focused on several different comic artists and the effects of their art on the war effort. Generally, when people saw their favorite characters enlisting in the service, it could influence readers to follow suit. Likewise, it could send the wrong impression about the military and who could be eligible to join. The author asserted “The subject of comic strips in general is suddenly a matter of pressing military importance....They have a wholesome fear of [comics] doing something and getting the war effort mixed up.” In the case of comic artist Russ Westover, one of the popular artists featured in the article, when the war effort became a solidified societal endeavor, he wanted to start drawing his recurring characters entering the military in order to show his support. The Navy, however, prevented him from drawing one of his female characters, Winnie Winkle, enlisting in the WAVES because the fictional character had children. The Navy justified this by saying, “Navy recruiting offices would be all cluttered up with young mothers demanding their muskets.” Making it clear that family and children came first, the military took extra pains to ensure that military service did not interfere with a woman’s duties as a mother, which asserted the traditional place of a woman within the family structure.<sup>33</sup>

It was also expected that all young women in the military would one day, once the war had ended, become future mothers of the next generation. The military often presented military

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<sup>32</sup>Mary Gibson, comic, *Collier’s Weekly*, May 26, 1945, 57.

<sup>33</sup>J. Clarke Mattimore and Hannibal Coons, “The Fighting Funnies,” *Collier’s Weekly*, 24, 44-45.

service as an experience that could one day be recounted to future generations, instilling them with similar patriotic sentiments. A recruitment advertisement printed in *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1943 showed a group of highly idealized, cartoon-like Waacs gathered around a piano singing while words float above the cheery scene declaring, "This is the life...and I love it!" (See Figure 3) In the text below, the fictional Waac proudly proclaims serving in the WAAC an experience to "tell my grandchildren." Not only did the Army expect the Waacs to one day become mothers, it expected them to impart tales of their wartime adventures to their future children and grandchildren. *Ladies' Home Journal* reported female soldiers wanting to "have a flock of children" once released from service, affirming that the military would not spoil their supposed natural inclination towards motherhood. Commercial ads as well pointed towards the return of the female soldiers to the home. A Norge Household Appliances ad juxtaposed two separate illustrated scenes. (See Figure 4) On the top half of the page, a Wave aided a pilot in a plane, the image's headline text praising the WAVES as an organization "Working for Today." Directly below, the ad depicts the same woman under the heading, "Planning for Tomorrow." The woman displays the exact same facial expression and same stance, except instead of helping a pilot, she is assisting a small child and preparing food for him. Norge claimed that they too were "planning for tomorrow" and "planning new household helps," making the assumption that Waves would return to their homes and former places within the domestic sphere. The clear parallels drawn in the imagery leave little to the imagination, and the advertisement clearly suggested that there was a general expectation that women would return to the home after their stint in the military.<sup>34</sup>

The popular press assured that military women themselves felt the same way. In the results of a 1945 poll of Wacs published in *The New York Times*, WAC Lieutenant Marie Cady

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<sup>34</sup>Women's Auxiliary Army Corps, "This is the Life...and I Love It!" recruitment advertisement, *Ladies' Home Journal*, April 1943, 179; "Our Girls in Uniform," *Ladies' Home Journal*, 72; Norge Household Appliances, "Working for Today, Planning for Tomorrow," advertisement, *Collier's Weekly*, August 19, 1944, 71.

revealed, “Most of them agreed that nothing could send them back to their own homes and kitchens so fast as life in the Army.” The general opinion of these Wacs illustrated the widespread assumption that post-military, servicewomen would return to their normal feminine duties without question. The article also concluded, “Service in the WAC will increase [a woman’s] femininity, and her hopes to settle down to the peace and security of her own home and family.” This poll indicated that many Wacs thought that their time in the WAC actually increased their femininity, news that corresponded well with official military messages. Likewise in the opinion of another servicewoman, military service would actually improve women’s functioning within the family. In a 1943 letter to the editor of *Collier’s Weekly*, a Minnesota Marine wrote a letter claiming that her time in the military “is indeed an amazing experience, one I’m sure will make me a better wife and mother-in due time, in due time.” This suggested that military service did not deter women from motherhood; instead, it served to make women even better mothers. Even though the military had taken a strong stance on preventing mothers from enlisting, it extended its support of the traditional family structure beyond recruitment policy and asserted that young unmarried female soldiers would return home after the war and become wives and mothers. Military skills would improve these women, ultimately making them better mothers with unique wisdom to pass onto their future children. The insistence that motherhood constituted a sacred purpose for women factored into the military’s intentions for women, both those recruited for service and those deemed ineligible. Creating restrictions on the service of mothers, the military upheld its support of the traditional place of women in the home and advocated that it did not want to interfere with existing mothers’ familial duties. Concerning the women chosen to serve, the military stressed its support of motherhood through its blatant and strong expectations that the servicewomen would return to civilian life after the war’s end

and assume their charge as mothers. The military's backing of motherhood reinforced women's traditional roles in society; however, asking women to postpone the quintessential role of their life and adapt to a masculine setting created conflicting messages about the appropriate place of women in society.<sup>35</sup>

### **Not too Military, Not too Feminine**

As women became commonplace in the military, the military required women to walk a tightrope of appearing masculine and professional while still retaining their femininity. Representations of female soldiers both overemphasized their womanly qualities as females and the professional nature of their military service. Often times in reports and articles, the military and popular media publications referred to the female soldiers as "girls," insisting on their femininity yet also presenting them in a less threatening, yet patronizing, tone. This confronted fears that women in the military would become too mannish. Recruitment centers even distributed the application to the WAAC on pink paper to distinguish the feminine nature of the branch. *Ladies' Home Journal*, in particular, took great pains to emphasize the feminine qualities of the women in uniform. When discussing life beyond the military, the author of the article reminds readers that, "in spare time gals go feminine and relax," indicating that their natural state was feminine and that when given the chance they would gladly return to womanly activities. The article also notes that when shopping on leave, soldiers "cast a longing and calculating eye on windows showing household things." The image of the female soldier the popular media and the military created was one that was intrinsically feminine.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>"Wacs Femininity Increased by Service: She Will Always Remain a Civilian at Heart," *The New York Times*, January 19, 1945, 20, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/107345996/141E34725037B3EA5DF/27?accountid=11667> (accessed December 4, 2013); Walter Davenport, "Any Week," *Collier's Weekly*, October 23, 1943, 4.

<sup>36</sup>"Women Marines," *Life*, 81; "First Women Soldiers Join the Army," *Life*, 74-81; "Our Girls in Uniform," *Ladies' Home Journal*, 65, 72.

In order for women to fit into military life, they had to take on some masculine characteristics. Often, professionalism within the military possessed masculine connotations; therefore, these women also had to appear as competent as any man. The female branches glorified the servicewomen's seamless adaptation to the largely masculine military lifestyle and their professional and competent nature when performing their duties. However, women had to be careful not to appear too comfortable within a masculine environment, lest they lose their femininity. Many recruitment advertisements and brochures stated that a position within the military was "nothing but patriotism, no glamour." The deliberate framing of the job as a serious undertaking, not for the frivolous, aimed at attracting women who could perform professionally within a male-dominated environment. A 1943 WAVE recruitment poster advertised, "There's a man-sized job for you in your Navy." The 1944 Marine brochure, *So Proudly We Serve*, encouraged, "It's a man's job but you're the girl to do it!" Although the military deliberately picked positions that society would consider acceptable for women, it also asserted these positions' seriousness by comparing them to men's jobs, creating contradictory representations of women's work within the military. On the one hand, women took on roles that for the most part conformed to societal standards of suitability for women, but they also technically served in historically male positions. The military's recruitment efforts highlighted these vacancies as "man-sized"; however, this did not mean that the jobs performed were necessarily masculine, rather that the jobs were of great importance and required immense commitment and efficacy, similar to what was expected from the male soldiers. Recruitment efforts constantly reminded women that the job they volunteered to take carried the responsibility comparable to that of a man, and if they were to serve they had to perform with equal professionalism and competence.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>United States Marine Corps, *So Proudly We Serve*, 4, 6; United States Navy, *How to Serve your Country in WAVES or SPARS*, 4; John Phillip Falter, "There's a Man-Sized Job for You in you Navy," (Washington D.C.:

As a reflection of these standards, branches retained certain military traditions that were clearly left over from an all-male military. For example, branches debated how enlisted personnel would address their superiors. Most military commands involved the use of “Sir” and other masculine pronouns. Branches such as the WAC opted to switch out the use of “Sir” and instead Wacs addressed their female officers as “Ma’am.” The WAVES employed a gender-neutral strategy to avoid calling attention to the officer’s sex. Waves responded to commands saying, “Yes, Lieutenant.” The SPARS and the Marines, however, retained the traditional response of, “Yes, Sir,” reappropriating the masculine pronoun to fit their female superiors. There existed a certain pride in being addressed with such masculine terms. In 1943, Helena Huntington Smith wrote in an article about the WAVES, “even the officers’ commissions read, ‘he and him,’ which proves something or the girls think it does.” Clearly, women wanted the military and the public at large to identify them as on par with the male members of the military and in some cases accepted the joint identification with males with open arms.<sup>38</sup>

In order for the women in uniform to take on these masculine roles, an idea emerged that in order to fit into the military structure, women had to *temporarily* trade in their femininity. *Prepare for the Official Tests for WAACS, WAVES, SPARS, and Marines*, offered guidance of what to expect throughout the entire application process and on the skills tests themselves. The author explained the switch to military life after training camp stating, “In four short weeks, you have made the transition from the ease, comfort and luxury of the average American woman’s civilian life to the orderly, organized, strict discipline of the Army.” The author presented and defined two clearly distinct lifestyles, one where women enjoyed the pleasures of home and femininity and the other where the Army assimilated them into a hardened predominately male

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United States Navy, 1943), <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/90714998/> (accessed November 2, 2013).

<sup>38</sup>Helena Huntington Smith, “Down to the Sea in Ships,” *Collier’s Weekly*, October 16, 1943, 30, 32.



arena. A 1943 issue of *The Alumnus*, Iowa State Teacher's College's magazine for alumni, featured a story on the WAVES, which had utilized the campus as the location for one of their training camps. Commenting on the living situation of the WAVES, the article states, "gone from their rooms are the feminine frills, they're soldiers now," suggesting that the Waves had to exchange their former feminine preferences for a new military, and therefore masculine, centered way of life. Comics in popular magazines also made light of the change the women experienced. One comic depicts a Wave in her parents' parlor room. Her father is shown feeling her arm muscles, looking impressed while her mother looks on in a combination of bewilderment and confusion. (See Figure 5) Their daughter's change in appearance appealed to the father's masculine characteristics and at the same time shocked her mother's feminine sensibilities. Another comic shows a Wave lying on her bed writing in her diary, an activity with feminine connotations. However, instead of the traditional entry beginning with the date followed with "Dear, Diary," the caption reads, "Wednesday, 22:30 o'clock. Dear Log:" (See Figure 6) Instead of writing in her diary the way she normally would have, the Navy had transformed her into a soldier that thought in a military context, even during personal moments of reflection. The idea that women in uniform had to set aside their femininity in order to exist within the military even further polarized the socially accepted roles for the two genders and created pressure upon the women to somehow uphold both.<sup>39</sup>

The expectations for women to adhere to their femininity while adopting masculinity resulted in a dichotomy, creating confusion as the military, the public, and the women themselves attempted to sort out their place in society. Octavus Ray Cohen, a reporter for

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<sup>39</sup>Lissey and Harvey, *Prepare for the Official Tests*, 27; Iowa State Teacher's College, "Teachers College Makes Way for WAVES," *The Alumnus*, 1943, 2, <http://digital.lib.uni.edu/cdm/ref/collection/wocs/id/183> (accessed November 2, 2013); Claude, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, November 25, 1944, 75; R.C. Dell, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, April 17, 1943, 73.

*Collier's Weekly* who wrote numerous articles that chronicled the progress of the WAC, stated, "you forget they are women," referring to the manner in which the Wacs performed their military duties. The military did not proclaim a goal of making the public "forget" that these soldiers were also women; however, the uncertainty of how to classify these women directly resulted from the conflicting image of the model military woman. Coast Guard historian Tom Beard in his study, *The Coast Guard*, observed that, "recruiting posters for the SPARS purveyed the wholesome, businesslike, but distinctly feminine image that the armed forces wanted the public to see in a woman in uniform." This projected image of the ideal military woman created confusion as to whether one should treat these women as ladies or as soldiers. A 1942 comic depicted two boy scouts walking away from a Waac at her desk as they exclaimed, "I just mumbled. I didn't know whether to say Madam, Miss, Sir, Officer or what." Not knowing how to address a woman in uniform highlighted that the addition of female soldiers challenged gender norms even within everyday interactions. The comic presented an element of confusion, as society attempted to categorize servicewomen, only to find that they did not fit neatly into the existing categories of soldier or woman. In a 1942 letter to the editor of *Collier's Weekly*, the author observed a confusing interchange between a Waac and a Colonel on a bus in San Francisco. When the Colonel boarded, the Waac sprung to salute and offered her seat to him immediately. The Colonel waved the offer off, since she was a lady, but the Waac insisted. This exchange went back and forth until the Colonel exclaimed, "Madame, I am making a silly ass of myself. Good day!" Although a comical example, this instance illustrates the social doubt the military forced onto the female soldiers in the form of a tightrope of masculinity and femininity. Despite the military's efforts to assure the public that servicewomen could fill both the role of

soldier and woman, female soldiers broke social norms and it left the public and the military clueless as to where these women fit into society's gender scripts.<sup>40</sup>

Although gender expectations and norms highly influenced the way the military and the popular media chose to present the women in uniform to the public, ultimately the women who volunteered for service understood that their purpose was not to challenge or uphold social structures, but to expedite the war effort as efficiently as possible. Women were not entirely enslaved to the proscriptions the military and the public placed upon them and to some degree the military understood this. These women were "doing a job not as a man or woman but as an American." However, these social scripts played a major role in many of the decisions the military made concerning their female branches.<sup>41</sup>

The selection of uniforms for these soldiers further illustrated the double bind society had created around these military women. Military representations of the female soldier created a dichotomy of expectations, as the new female soldier ideal required servicewomen to both retain their feminine qualities, pursue motherhood, and hold socially acceptable jobs in order to accommodate the male desire to fight. This dichotomy also demanded that these women adapt to a masculine environment and fill traditional male roles within a military context, which at the time was considered a male-dominated sphere. Confusion resulted from this conflicting ideal, leaving the public clueless as to where these women fit into existing social categories. Despite the complications, women served valiantly throughout the war effort, exceeding expectations

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<sup>40</sup>Octavus Ray Cohen, "Municipal Love Affair, *Collier's Weekly*, May 29, 1943, 14; Tom Beard, *The Coast Guard: Foundation for Coast Guard History*, (Seattle, WA: Hugh Lauter Levin Associates Inc., 2004), 111; Barney Tobey, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, July 25, 1942, 50; Walter Davenport, "Any Week," *Collier's Weekly*, October 24, 1942, 4.

<sup>41</sup>United States Navy, *How to Serve your Country in WAVES or SPARS*, 7.

while working alongside men, epitomized in reporter Cohen observation, “It’s a *people’s* Army now.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Octavus Ray Cohen, “She’s in the Army Now,” *Collier’s Weekly*, September 5, 1942, 38.

## **“Functional yet Feminine” A Case Study of the Female Military Uniform**

A 1942 article in *Life* announcing the final design for new uniforms specially tailored for the WAVES declared the outfit “functional yet feminine.” After Congress approved the WAAC bill, the issue of designing and picking a uniform presented itself for the WAAC and the soon to be formed WAVES, SPARS, and Marines. The effort to design a “functional yet feminine” uniform suggested that the military needed a uniform to be structured and professional, but also had to keep in mind the gender expectations about women. The uniforms symbolized the dichotomy of gender the military created as women attempted to identify as soldiers with the masculine connotations accompanying the role, while still retaining their feminine qualities. Related to the femininity of the servicewomen, a contradiction arose as the new uniforms could be claimed as either fashion forward outfits or a way that the military inhibited and quashed female individuality as expressed through fashion. As the military and advertisers presented these varying images of the female military figure to the public, the uniform became a powerful symbol separating servicewomen from the general public as well as from the male ranks of the military. Editorials and opinion pieces revealed the uniform as a key element in the formation of the public opinion of the female branches of the military. Women reported taking the uniform into account when choosing which branch to join. Debate over the choice of skirts over slacks and other elements of the uniform ensued and elevated the question of the influence the uniforms had on the femininity of the servicewomen.<sup>43</sup>

### **Deliberately Designed**

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<sup>43</sup>“WAVES Uniform,” *Life*, September 21, 1942, 49, <http://books.google.com/books?id=oE4EAAAAMBAJ&lpg=PA49&dq=women%20accepted%20for%20voluntary%20emergency%20service&pg=PA51#v=onepage&q=women%20accepted%20for%20voluntary%20emergency%20service&f=false> (accessed November 21, 2013); Walter Davenport, “Any Week,” *Collier’s Weekly*, June 17, 1944, 80; Eleanor Roosevelt, “If You Ask Me,” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, April 1942, 126.

The newly formed WAAC started planning its new uniform almost immediately. With no previous precedent, the question soon arose as to whether the uniform should bear similarities to the male Army uniforms or adopt a totally new design to distinguish the female auxiliary status. Originally, leaders wanted the WAAC to utilize a uniform of a completely different color to differentiate between the male and female soldiers. Director Hobby, however, directly asserted that the WAAC uniform should conform to the existing uniforms and sport the same olive drab and khaki colors, which would make it easier to integrate the WAAC into the Army officially further down the road. Many different designers sent in samples but it was finally decided that soldiers would wear a six-gore skirt, a jacket, a shirt with a regulation khaki tie, and a brimmed hat. (See Figure 7) Several designers collectively proposed that the head of Pallas Athene, the Greek goddess of wisdom and just warfare, serve as the insignia of the WAAC, and prominently displayed it on the uniform hat. A *New York Times* article heralded the new uniforms as “a natty outfit patterned after men’s clothes, same colors, markings” and declared them “styles for feminine figure.” In choosing similar uniforms, the Army asserted its position that the female soldiers needed to have some continuity and similarities with the male soldiers, but also had to retain and project their femininity. The choice of the olive drab for the WAAC uniform paved the way for the selection of uniforms similar to the male counterpart in the three other branches.<sup>44</sup>

The WAVES immediately garnered much attention for their striking uniforms. Famous fashion designer Mainbocher donated his designs to the Navy, which featured traditional Naval symbols, a “soft crowned hat,” a Navy blue jacket, and a “flattering six-gore skirt.” (See Figure 8) The Navy took care to highlight the designer elements, such as the pleats on the skirt or the

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<sup>44</sup>Treadwell, *The Women’s Army Corps*, 36-39; “Olive Drab Chosen for WAAC Uniform,” *The New York Times*, May 23, 1942, 10, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/106434081?accountid=11667> (accessed November 20, 2013).

way the hat framed the face in order to attract more women. Many popular magazines and newspapers published articles simply announcing the uniform design and provided pictures of models sporting their newest fashion. The SPARS also adopted Mainbocher's design, only it switched out the Naval insignias for the gold shield of the Coast Guard. (See Figure 9) A fashion forward design helped to set apart the WAVES and the SPARS, which attracted both public attention and increased visibility to potential recruits. The Marines, created last, adopted the forest green of the male Marine uniform, along with the insignia. (See Figure 10) Uniforms served to create legitimacy for the female branches because the similarities between the newly designed outfits and the established and well-recognized male uniforms drew obvious parallels. However, the military made sure to highlight that they aimed to preserve feminine fashion.<sup>45</sup>

### **The Uniform and Military Identity**

Above all, the uniform identified these women as *military* personnel. The similarities to the male uniforms left little to the imagination as to which organization these women belonged. In 1943, a magazine advertisement pitched Gem razors for men saying, "Take it from the girls in blue and khaki." No further explanation or direct identification was necessary. The advertisement simply stating the colors effectively communicated that it referred to the WAC and the WAVES. In the article, "WAVES Uniforms," which first announced Mainbocher's designs, Mainbocher stresses the similarities to the male uniforms and their unique military nature, blending the masculine with the feminine.<sup>46</sup>

The uniforms also distinguished women, not only from the male branches of the military, but also from their fellow female branches separating the identities, stigmas, and responsibilities

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<sup>45</sup>United States Navy, *How to Serve Your Country in the WAVES or the SPARS*, 8; "WAVES Uniform," *Life*, 49; Lissey and Harvey, *Prepare for the Official Tests*, 67; United States Marine Corps, *So Proudly We Serve*, 20-21.

<sup>46</sup>Gem Razor Blades, "We're Against 5'oclock Shadow!" *Collier's Weekly*, September 11, 1943, 36; "WAVES Uniform," *Life*, 49.

associated with each individual branch. The Marine recruitment brochure *So Proudly We Serve*, emphasized the difference between “a woman in uniform” and a Marine. The brochure suggested that putting on the female Marine uniform differentiated a woman from any other woman in uniform because with the Marine uniform, she embodied all of the honors and responsibilities that accompanied service within the Marines specifically. The differences in the uniforms represented the differences in the service branches and all the expectations and responsibilities associated with them. Often times, articles or advertisements just used uniforms to represent the different services. The American Meat Institute directed an ad towards the women’s branches, representing them with vignettes of women wearing the different branches’ hats. The advertisement argued that the government provided women in the service with sufficient meat in their diet and encouraged servicewomen to continue steady meat consumption once their service had ended. Healthy smiling women in uniform hats, one for every branch, affirmed this message. The use of the uniform hats within this advertisement not only served to represent and differentiate between the female branches; it also legitimized the American Meat Institute’s claims because it gave the impression that the female military validated the addition of meat to a healthy diet. Presenting the military as advocates for meat gave the advertisement authority. The interesting choice of female soldiers suggested further legitimacy because women had to “be their own mess sergeant” and cook at home and would therefore know more about what consisted of a healthy diet. Likewise, an Army propaganda poster illustrated the iconic Rosie the Riveter standing and gazing off into the distance looking accomplished. Beside her in line with her gaze, only the hats of the different military and support institutions served to represent the different branches of service as a whole. The use of the uniform, particularly the



hat, as a way to represent and distinguish the female military branches proves that the power of the uniform in public depictions of military identity.<sup>47</sup>

The uniform did not only distinguish between the different military branches, it also became a point of pride among the female soldiers. A blurb published in the *Chicago Defender* pictured three WAAC officers under the title, “Proud of their Uniforms.” The caption read, “‘An honor and a privilege,’ this is the meaningful phrase that WAAC officers used to describe their emotion in donning the uniform of the United States Army and becoming soldiers.” Describing the WAAC uniform as “*the* uniform of the United States Army,” the feature solidified that these uniforms were those of soldiers, female or not. The caption insinuated that along with the uniform of the Army, came the pride of serving in the Army. This pride did not belong to exclusively male soldiers, but extended to their female counterparts. The Marines boasted that, “women of America are privileged to serve cause and country, under this proudest of military insignia- the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor.” Female Marines, by extension, took on the legacy and the burden of upholding the reputation of the Marines Corps as a whole. Female Marines “will wear Marine ‘green’ and be expected to live up to the rigid Marine standard of efficiency and service.” The uniform performed a greater role than simply identifying to which branch a female soldier belonged. It also represented her commitment to her branch of service to respect its traditions and history and her dedication to service and duty within the military. Above all, the

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<sup>47</sup>United States Marine Corps, *So Proudly We Serve*, 9; American Meat Institute, “The Proteins of Meat and Women at War,” advertisement, *Ladies’ Home Journal*, November 1943, 143; Adolph Triedler, “She’s WOW,” recruitment advertisement, 1942, [http://contentdm.mdch.org/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=%2Fmdwp&CISOPTR=42&DMSCALE=100.00000&DMWIDTH=600&DMHEIGHT=600&DMMODE=viewer&DMFULL=0&DMOLDSCALE=10.00000&DMX=0&DMY=0&DMTEXT=&DMTHUMB=1&REC=1&DMROTATE=0&x=85&y=65](http://contentdm.mdch.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=%2Fmdwp&CISOPTR=42&DMSCALE=100.00000&DMWIDTH=600&DMHEIGHT=600&DMMODE=viewer&DMFULL=0&DMOLDSCALE=10.00000&DMX=0&DMY=0&DMTEXT=&DMTHUMB=1&REC=1&DMROTATE=0&x=85&y=65) (accessed November 20, 2013).

uniform extended the existing culture of pride associated with military service onto the female soldiers.<sup>48</sup>

Since the uniform served as such a powerful symbol to both the men and women in service and the general public, the military took great pains to assure that their designs could only be used within the proper military setting. The National Defense Act made it illegal for non-military personnel to wear a military uniform, and the female uniforms were no exception. If clothing manufacturers produced or sold dresses closely resembling the new uniforms, the government issued them a fine of \$300 or sentenced them to six months in prison. Clearly, the government wanted to maintain the strictly military association with the uniforms and discourage copycat designs from becoming commonplace. In one case, the Syracuse police arrested a young girl “for illegally wearing the uniform of the Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps.” Such drastic measures clarified to the public that the military reserved these designs for their soldiers, and they did not want just anyone wearing them. A civilian would not have the same sense of pride or duty associated with the uniform and might tarnish what the uniform stood for, namely the reputation of the military branches themselves.<sup>49</sup>

### **Functional yet Feminine**

Although the uniforms identified these women as official military personnel with distinct parallels to the male soldiers, the uniform also illustrated the conflicting pressures to appear feminine yet also military. Nearly all mentions of the uniform highlighted the similarity to the men’s uniforms, but also emphasized the femininity of the designs, which in turn drew attention

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<sup>48</sup>“Proud of their Uniforms,” *Chicago Defender*, August 29, 1942, 17, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/492719772?accountid=11667> (accessed November 21, 2013); United States Marine Corps, *So Proudly We Serve*, 2-3.

<sup>49</sup>“Rules on WAC Uniforms,” *The New York Times*, February 15, 1944, 20, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/106880257?accountid=11667> (accessed November 21, 2013); Freling Foster, “Keeping up with the World,” *Collier’s Weekly*, January 16, 1943, 6; “Girl is Held as Bogus Waac,” *The New York Times*, September 28, 1942, 34, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/106288376?accountid=11667> (accessed November 20, 2013).

to the idea that these women still retained their female qualities. *So Proudly We Serve* emphasizes that the female uniforms “are identical with the uniform of Combat Marines. Otherwise, [the style] has been adapted and redesigned to modify its military cut, to preserve your tailored femininity to flatter your face and your figure.” The Marines wanted their female counterparts to appear professional and standardized, but in a way that did not remove them from their womanly qualities entirely. Likewise the SPARS advertized their uniforms as “military but feminine.” An article in the *Saturday Evening Post* comparing the uniforms of the women who served in World War I to those in World War II states clearly, “In developing the current crop of uniforms, the services sought to strike a balance between martial formality and femininity, so a girl could fit into military surroundings, yet not feel irrevocably shorn of all her maidenly graces.” The uniform symbolized the conflicting situation the military placed the female soldiers into, one where women felt pressure to act masculine and professional, yet not too masculine lest they be the subjects of public outcry.<sup>50</sup>

### **The Conflict of the Uniform in the Female Fashion World**

For the first time, the military had to take into account female fashion scripts, such as the use of makeup, in relation to uniform standards. The various branches had different regulations regarding makeup in conjunction with the uniform. For the most part, the military allowed makeup, so long as it was not too conspicuous and it did not interfere with their military duties. The Marine Corps did make a rule that lipstick and nail polish had to be a shade that complimented the scarlet cord on their hat. Allowing women to continue to wear makeup in

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<sup>50</sup>United States Marine Corps, *So Proudly We Serve*, 20-21; United States Coast Guard, *Facts About Spars*, 8; “Women of Two Wars,” *The Saturday Evening Post*, May 29, 1943, 26, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=18990991&site=ehost-live&scope=site> (accessed November 20, 2013).

uniform, the military conceded that certain elements of feminine dress needed to be maintained in order to preserve their femininity.<sup>51</sup>

In order to cater to servicewomen, makeup companies soon took notice of this policy and began to create shades of products specifically designed to match the service uniforms. Cutex created the nail polish shade, “On Duty,” to go with the WAAC uniform. An advertisement for this new shade illustrated a line of Waacs saluting, drawn in the similar willowy style often used in fashion sketches. The artist drew the entire image in black and white, except for the women’s fingernails, which are colored pinkish-red and further extenuated with the salutes. The painted nails, in this case, represented the femininity of the Waacs, and the illustration literally highlighted this aspect. Tangee Lipsticks in their advertisement declared, “you needn’t take off your attractiveness when you put on a uniform,” and pictured a Marine donning lipstick. This related makeup directly to femininity and insinuated that it was important to maintain female beauty standards, even within the masculine environment of the military. It also suggested that “attractiveness” was a naturally occurring female quality that had to be “take[n] off” rather than put on. Suggesting that women in the military hypothetically would “take off [their] attractiveness” implied that entering into the military context would rob women of natural femininity. Avon even spun the addition of the feminine to the military structure as a positive change. An advertisement printed in *Ladies’ Home Journal* proudly proclaimed, “She brought loveliness to the Halls of Montezuma,” referring to Lucy Brewer, a woman who posed as a man and served with the Marines in the War of 1812. This is an odd comparison, considering that Brewer pretended to be a man and probably did not call attention to her femininity; however, Avon wanted to promote the positive effects of femininity, in this case “loveliness,” most likely acquired through the use of their products, when introduced into the masculine context of the

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<sup>51</sup>Mary V Stremow, “Marine Corps Women’s Reserve,” in *In Defense of a Nation*, 83.

military. Avon was not the only make-up company that stressed the importance of feminine beauty amongst the female soldiers. Elizabeth Arden manufactured a line of lipsticks to match each service uniform and claimed that they “make you more aware of the woman.” Makeup accentuated the femininity of the female soldiers. The military knew this and allowed for servicewomen to continue to wear it because it reaffirmed to the servicewomen and the general public that the war was not robbing them of their female aspects entirely.<sup>52</sup>

The uniforms of the female branches made a splash in the world of female fashion. The public saw the uniforms presented as a fashion statement and a popular one at that. Advertisers capitalized on the popular obsession with the female military uniforms, praising them in order to sell to the female soldiers and other admirers of their uniforms. Fashion historian Irene Guenther argues in her book, *Nazi Chic? Fashioning Women in the Third Reich*, that through the study of fashion, “[one] can learn much about a nation’s vulnerabilities and insecurities, its inner workings, and its cultural confidence (or lack thereof).” The uniform as a fashion symbol and in some cases, a fashion ideal, represented the positive public support for the female servicewomen that the uniform raised. A Camel cigarette advertisement declared servicewomen, “First in Fashion,” illustrating the women from the various branches in their uniforms. (See Figure 11) Cutex, in an advertisement, illustrated posters of women in the different uniforms and proclaimed them, “1944’s best dressed.” This overwhelming support of the uniform created yet another symbolic meaning for the uniforms, one of female fashion. The Marines asserted that the uniform hat was “designed by a famous hat-maker to flatter all type faces.” Advertising the flattering nature of the uniforms allowed the military to accent how the uniforms tailored to the

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<sup>52</sup>Cutex, “For Wear in Your Country’s Service,” advertisement, *Ladies’ Home Journal*, February 1943, 121; Tangee Lipsticks, “Be Alert...and Alluring!” advertisement, *Ladies’ Home Journal*, March 1944, 75; Avon Cosmetics, “She Brought Loveliness to the Halls of Montezuma,” advertisement, *Ladies’ Home Journal*, August 1944, 97; Elizabeth Arden, “Frankly, She was Fascinating,” advertisement, *Ladies’ Home Journal*, March 1943, 87.

expectations of female fashion. Fashion Frocks, a clothing supplier, claimed the WAC and the WAVE uniforms to be, “The two best styles of the year!” Although Fashion Frocks could not sell these uniforms to civilians, using the uniforms in their advertisement demonstrated their support for the war effort and illustrated their support for the new military uniforms. The public saw fashion and dress as related to femininity and the idea of the uniform as an up and coming trend reaffirmed the femininity of women within the new branches of service. The uniforms emerged as a symbol of female fashion for both servicewomen and civilians alike, bringing a cultural element of femininity, fashion, to the forefront of military dress.<sup>53</sup>

Although these uniforms emerged as a feminine fashion symbol, the lack of choices within the uniform guidelines hindered the use of fashion as personal expression. Stereotypes presented women as highly concerned with appearances and wanting a wide selection of clothing at their disposal. The uniform did not allow for much individuality when choosing outfits and to some people it seemed odd that women would willingly give up their unique everyday clothing for a standardized outfit that thousands of other women also wore. A comic printed in *Collier's Weekly* depicted a reproachful superior officer examining a soldier's closet and finding the jackets of varying ranks within the Army. The soldier retorted with, “I don't like to wear the same thing every day!” (See Figure 12) The artist joked at the supposed female penchant for variety in fashion and how that seemed incompatible with military uniform regulations.<sup>54</sup>

Female soldiers did not only lose variety after donning their uniforms, they also lost the privilege of dressing uniquely. Another comic showed a line-up of Waacs, presumably for

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<sup>53</sup>Irene Guenther, *Nazi Chic? Fashioning Women in the Third Reich* (New York: Berg, 2004), 10; Camel Cigarettes, “First in Fashion,” advertisement, *Collier's Weekly*, October 30, 1943, back cover; Cutex, “These Women- 1944's Best Dressed- Choose their Favorite Cutex Shade,” advertisement, *Ladies' Home Journal*, August 1944, 113; United States Marine Corps, *So Proudly We Serve*, 20-21; Fashion Frocks, “The Two Best Styles of the Year,” advertisement, *Ladies' Home Journal*, September 1944, 115.

<sup>54</sup>Charles Adorino, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, August 12, 1944, 61.

uniform inspection. The officer stopped at one Waac, who sported a comically large flower coming out of her uniform hat. In her defense, the Waac justified her disposal of the uniform hat with the protest, “But it was just like everyone else’s.” The theme of loss of personal expression also carried over into advertising. Lady Buxton, a manufacturer of ladies’ handbags, showed a Wac holding a non-regulation purse declaring, “I’m lost when I’m without my Lady Buxton, especially when I’m in my uniform!” Certain accessories obviously were not permitted in conjunction with the military uniform. Lady Buxton, however, chose to present this as the military causing the loss of a practical everyday civilian accessory, such as the pocketbook.<sup>55</sup>

The uniforms could also be seen as a form of separation from the fashion world, a sphere of American femininity. The comic artist Leonard Dove depicted two Waacs walking down the street passing a scowling gentleman. As they passed, one of the Waacs said to the other, “That’s my dress designer—he hasn’t spoken to me in weeks.” Although this poked fun at the sensitivity of the dress designer, it also illustrated the disconnection of the Waac from her civilian fashions. Along with the conflicting presentation of masculine and female gender roles, the uniform also created a new paradox. Since a large number of women joined the service and wore the uniforms, the public inevitably co-opted them as a symbol of a new popular female trend. However, these uniforms also represented the restrictions placed upon women concerning their clothing choices, which could be construed as obstructing female fashion, a facet of American femininity.<sup>56</sup>

### **Public Perception**

Public reception to the uniforms directly shaped the public opinion of the various military branches and their perception of the femininity of the female soldiers. The new uniforms

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<sup>55</sup>Lundberg, comic, *Ladies’ Home Journal*, July 1942, 28; Lady Buxton, “I’m Lost Without My Lady Buxton,” advertisement, *Collier’s Weekly*, May 8, 1943, 72.

<sup>56</sup>Leonard Dove, comic, *Collier’s Weekly*, July 11, 1942, 86.

garnered considerable media attention with articles being published solely about the uniforms, so the public became rather familiar with them and began to form their own opinions. A 1944 editorial in *Collier's Weekly* bashed the WAC uniform, labeling it “a sad and sackish-looking rig to wear.” The author claimed that the uniform made the servicewomen look unattractive and called for “a WAC uniform that compares favorably in swank and snap with WAVE, SPAR, and lady Marine getups.” With the war in full force, one would think that there would be more pressing topics for an editorial about than the state of the WAC uniforms. This illustrated just how concerned the public was with the uniforms and the way they presented American women to the public.<sup>57</sup>

In some instances, the uniform served as the deciding factor as to which branch of the service to join. A woman in a letter to the editor of *Collier's Weekly* expressed that she wanted to be a WASP, but thought that her figure would look better in a WAVE uniform, so she could not decide. Clearly, the uniform played an important role in recruiting potential soldiers, if this woman second-guessed her interests and talents simply over the clothing she would wear. The uniform played a definite factor in the public perception of the female branches, becoming both a vehicle for criticism and creating images of the different branches that ultimately swayed some people's decisions to enlist.<sup>58</sup>

The masculine nature of the uniform caused concerns that the servicewomen would lose their femininity. Although the military reiterated the feminine elements of the uniforms, and advertisers proclaimed the new outfits fashionable, some were not fully convinced that the uniforms were indeed feminine. From the branches' conception, the potential integration of pants into the uniform drew public attention. In Eleanor Roosevelt's advice column “If You Ask Me,”

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<sup>57</sup>“Reform for a Uniform,” *Collier's Weekly*, June 3, 1944, 82.

<sup>58</sup>Walter Davenport, “Any Week,” *Collier's Weekly*, June 17, 1944, 80.



printed in *Ladies' Home Journal*, a reader asked the First Lady if she thought the military would use slacks in their female uniforms. Mrs. Roosevelt replied that, "Slacks are only becoming to slim figures and it would be hard on the stoutish ladies to condemn them to slacks!" Mrs. Roosevelt reaffirmed that the uniforms should make the servicewomen look as attractive and feminine as possible, for the servicewomen's own benefit. Nevertheless, comics frequently poked fun at the chosen uniform skirt, portraying it as masculine. One comic depicted two Waacs examining a pair of slacks. One Waac exclaimed to the other, "I'm buying some. I don't think we should submerge our femininity entirely." Notably, this artist presented a menswear-inspired article of clothing and asserted it to be more feminine than the uniforms designed for the female members of the military. Similarly, one young man saw the uniform as masking femininity. In a letter to the editor, he professed interest in proposing to his girlfriend, a Wave, but was holding off because he was wondering, "What will she look like in civilian clothes?" The idea that he could not picture his girlfriend in a typical civilian dress revealed that he needed reassurance of her womanhood before he could propose to her. Considering the military's efforts to insist on the feminine aspects of the uniforms, they understood that the public would be concerned about the new servicewomen losing their female qualities as they ventured outside of their traditional gender norms. The concern about the uniforms illustrated the public's interest in how the military represented the female figure and whether the servicewomen could retain their femininity.<sup>59</sup>

The uniform profoundly affected the way the public viewed servicewomen in context with their masculine surroundings. Military and commercial depictions of the female military figure created the dichotomy of "functional yet feminine." Since the military purposely designed

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<sup>59</sup>Eleanor Roosevelt, "If You Ask Me," *Ladies' Home Journal*, April 1942, 126; Wade Monroe, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, August 1, 1942, 42; Walter Davenport, "Any Week," *Collier's Weekly*, January 13, 1945, 29.

the female uniforms to look similar to the male ones, it had to over-emphasize the feminine elements of the uniforms to assure that women could still remain womanly. Although the military had figured out how to incorporate women's dress into the military context, they soon had to reconcile with incorporating the female body and sexuality into the predominately masculine sphere.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>“WAVES Uniform,” *Life*, 49.

## **“War Blondes” and “BAMS” Confronting the Female Body, Sexuality and Relationships within the Military**

As women made their way into the ranks of the armed forces, the military faced a new obstacle. Balancing the idea of the female identity and the masculine space of the military proved challenging. Altering the uniforms to appeal to a female demographic while still attempting to maintain existing military style and order paved the way for the idea of the female body as out of place within the military context, which manifested itself in comic and also patronizing representations of servicewomen. In addition, the military grappled with the reconciliation of the female body and how it related to female sexuality and what place it took within the military. The military had no experience with integrating female sexuality into their existing norms and often comic artists represented the female body in the military context as hypersexualized. Often these representations of female sexuality within the military served to discredit the legitimacy of the servicewomen. Finally, these representations of the conflicting gender roles laid out for women increased commentary, both positive and negative, about relationships between the servicewomen and the opposite sex and how women’s presence in the military would change dating and marriage scripts altogether.

### **The Female Body as Out of Place**

Commentary about women by people within the military often pointed to the female body as out of place and therefore problematic. Helen Clifford Gunter, a Wave, shared within her memoir, *Navy Wave*, published in 1992, that the servicewomen “found it difficult to achieve perfect alignment with the female torso” in regards to military drills. Gunter clearly stated that the female body did not fit into preexisting military standards. The idea that the female body proved unable to “align” with military custom alluded to the supposed incompatibility between

the female body and the military. The uniform designed for the servicewomen symbolized the perceived difficulty of the military's attempt to integrate the female body and the female presence into military custom.<sup>61</sup>

Even though the military had the uniforms designed specifically for servicewomen to perform military activities, the uniform did not always allow for women to uphold both societal notions of propriety for women and military expectations. Often times, comics pointed out the humorous nature of a servicewoman trying to battle with these two expectations. A comic printed in *Collier's Weekly* in 1944 illustrated a servicewoman's interaction with a male officer in four panels. (See Figure 13) In the first panel, she saw the male officer approaching from a distance. In the second panel, she pulled down the right side of her skirt, and in the third panel, she pulled down the left side of her skirt. Finally in the fourth panel, she raised her arm to salute the male officer, and it becomes clear that she had pulled down her skirt to ensure that it would not rise up too far and expose her upper thigh. Societal standards dictated that women should not wear skirts less than a certain length and military protocol espoused that soldiers must salute their superior officers. In this situation, the servicewoman must go out of her way to adjust herself to satisfy both military and societal requirements. The serviceman did not need to worry about the length of his pants when saluting. Despite efforts to create a uniform that both satisfied societal notions of what the public deemed appropriate to clothe the female body and the demands of military life, servicewomen still needed to adjust their clothing to fit the body politics of the time. Wearing a skirt while still needing to maintain modesty placed limitations on the mobility of the servicewomen. Male soldiers did not face these particular challenges. These

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<sup>61</sup>Helen Clifford Gunter, *Navy Wave: Memories of World War II* (Fort Bragg, CA: Cypress House Press, 1992), page 41.

extra concerns marked the female body as atypical and therefore out of place within the military setting.<sup>62</sup>

Servicewomen obviously deviated from social prescriptions concerning appropriate occupations for a female, and they simultaneously shattered the norms concerning who was eligible for military service. As a result, the female body became symbolic in representing the female as the “other” within the military. Mary Stremlow remembered the male Marines referring to the female Marines as “BAMS” or “broad ass Marines.” This nickname marginalized the female soldiers, differentiating them from their male companions in a tone that presented servicewomen as inferior. This derogatory term stuck, and in one instance, a group of male seamen painted “BAM” on the sides of shaved dogs. The seamen then released the dogs to crash a Women’s Marine Corps graduation ceremony. The nickname also reduced the servicewomen to a portion of their body. Both the tone of inferiority and minimization of female soldiers to their anatomical qualities served to discredit and question the legitimacy of women serving in the military. Comic artist and serviceman Sergeant Douglas Borgstedt illustrated this symbolism in his comic printed in *Collier’s Weekly* in 1943. (See Figure 14) He drew two soldiers, a man and a woman, sitting side by side at a bus stop or train station with their rucksacks. The artist drew the male’s rucksack to look like the typical military pack, a cylindrical sack. The artist, however, depicted the female soldier’s rucksack as a cylindrical sack with two bulges on the upper half. The artist quite obviously drew her sack in an exaggerated manner and purposely placed the bulges to mimic the look of breasts on a female body. The military did not issue servicewomen with different packs from the men, but in this case the depiction of the rucksack served as a vehicle for the artist to make anatomical distinctions between a male soldier and a female soldier.

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<sup>62</sup>Carl Rose, comic, *Collier’s Weekly*, June 10, 1944, 33.

This denoted the female body as the other, since the conventional rucksack equated to the male soldier and the absurd or funny-looking rucksack represented the female soldier.<sup>63</sup>

Representations of the servicewomen also conveyed the female body as an obstacle to military function. Comic artist for various camp newspapers Corporal Vic Herman featured his reoccurring character, Winnie the Wac, in many of his comics. In one comic, he illustrated a male officer awarding Winnie a medal. The officer awkwardly wavered, wanting to place the medal in the traditional space on the uniform, but also not wanting to touch the servicewoman's breasts. Winnie's breasts became an obstacle to the officer and interfered with him performing his normal military duties. Similarly, a comic printed in *Collier's Weekly* in 1942 illustrated a group of Waacs lined up for inspection. The officer stopped at one of the Waacs and demanded that she, "Empty her pockets." In this case, the Waac had nothing in her shirt pockets; the Waac's breasts had offended the inspector and caused the officer to reprimand the soldier. Although this comic depicted a misunderstanding, it still presented the female body as deviant from the military norm. The military had not previously tailored their regulations and inspection standards to accommodate the presence of female soldiers. As servicewomen entered the military, their presence challenged hundreds of years of military precedent designed for males only, thus marking as the "other."<sup>64</sup>

Comics also depicted the female experience and concerns as obsolete in the military setting. Jay Irving's comic printed in 1944 illustrated a young Wac learning how to stand guard at her post. The commanding officer instructed her on how to respond if approached at night saying, "No, no, Private Hoskins no! Not 'Stop or I'll scream' ...Just 'Halt, who's there?'" This

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<sup>63</sup>Stremlow, *Free a Marine to Fight*, 11-12; Monahan, *A Few Good Women*, 96-97; Sergeant Douglas Borgstedt, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, September 25, 1943, 56.

<sup>64</sup>Herman, "Winnie the Wac," *Life*, 12; Garrett Price, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, July 4, 1942, 56.

comic made light of the fear of assault that as a rule affected women more strongly than men. It suggested that servicewomen would have to unlearn their concerns as women and adopt a more masculine and military attitude to their duties. The instructor in this comic saw no room for the Wac's original trepidations, a result from the female experience, again marking the female as the "other."<sup>65</sup>

### **Hypersexualizing the American Servicewoman**

Oftentimes, representations of servicewomen would overemphasize female sexuality, which served to discredit women and overlook the fact that they too served in the military in an official position worthy of respect. Reducing servicewomen to sexy bimbos represented them as less threatening than their male counterparts as well as less serious and competent. The article, "Municipal Love Affair," printed in *Collier's Weekly* in 1943, detailed the WAAC's activities at the training camp in Daytona Beach, Florida. The article, for the most part, recounted the daily activities and the relationship the training camp held with the surrounding town. The author, however, added a blurb about how the Waacs would often go to the beach for leisure and included the commentary, for no apparent reason at all, "Most of them do their bathing suits no disfavor." The author's judgment did not relate to the rest of the article, but it reduced the female soldiers to good-looking female bodies in bathing suits. It was completely unnecessary for the author to give his opinion on the Waacs' bodies or their sexuality. Flippant and sexist comments like this assessed the Waacs as sexual objects, which drew attention away from their status as competent and official soldiers.<sup>66</sup>

Cartoons and caricatures often used the Wac as comedic material, overemphasizing her gender through exaggerated body parts. Corporal Vic Herman's cartoon character, Winnie the

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<sup>65</sup>Jay Irving, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, January 15, 1944, 64.

<sup>66</sup>Octavus Ray Cohen, "Municipal Love Affair," *Collier's Weekly*, 14.

Wac, appeared in Army camp newspapers throughout the war. Winnie presented the Wacs as ditsy, over-sexualized bimbos who were in no way fit for military service. The way Herman drew Winnie emphasized her female figure and grossly exaggerated the uniform. The dress Winnie wore was extremely short and form fitting, straying far from the actual modest uniform of the WAC. In actuality, the Wacs' skirts measured strictly sixteen inches from the ground. Winnie also wore rather high heels in comparison to the short heels the WAC provided its soldiers.<sup>67</sup>

Many of the situations in which Winnie appeared involved her relationships and intrigues with servicemen. She was often shown walking with soldiers on both sides and sitting on the laps of G.I.s. Cartoonist Herman also played with the femininity of the Wacs and the supposed "irony" of a woman soldier. In one cartoon, Winnie hangs lingerie, uniquely female garments, all of which have chevron patches sewn on, which symbolized ranking within the Army. In this example, Army custom has invaded the most private of female garb, undergarments. The use of female underwear in the comic also carries sexual connotations, suggesting that military regulation had taken over a private sphere of Winnie's life, but that she was nevertheless sexually brazen, hanging her undergarments in public. The caption of another Winnie cartoon read, "Hey, soldier—your slip is showing." (See Figure 15) This again exemplified the female uniform's inadequacy to meet both societal standards of modesty and the military's demand for mobility, a concern unique to servicewomen.<sup>68</sup>

The real life Wac who inspired Herman's drawings, Private First Class Althea Semanehik, appeared at the end of a 1945 article in *Life* about Herman's work. The article gave very little detail about her as a person, just that she was the basis for the comics. This put the idea

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<sup>67</sup>Herman, "Winnie the Wac," *Life*, 12.

<sup>68</sup>Herman, "Winnie the Wac," *Life*, 12.



in the public's mind that these cartoons must be rooted in some truth if Herman based them on an actual Wac. These and other cartoons became the vehicle for common stereotypes to be broadcasted to the male soldiers and ultimately the American public.<sup>69</sup>

Similar cartoons also suggested that these sexualized soldiers would distract their male counterparts, reducing the efficacy of the military. A comic printed in *Collier's Weekly* in 1944 highlighted this perceived distraction. The artist drew the comic in four panels. In the first panel, a male officer approached a Wac on a blustery day. The second panel depicted the Wac saluting the officer. The act of lifting her arm to salute combined with the wind, made the Wac's skirt fly up, exposing quite a bit of thigh. The third panel showed the Wac passing the officer while the officer quickly ran back around to face the Wac again. The fourth panel illustrated the two soldiers saluting again; only this time, the male officer clearly ogles the Wac's exposed leg. The act of saluting, as noted in a previous example, became a common thread in comics depicting servicewomen. Saluting constituted one of the most basic and recognizable military customs and the idea that servicewomen could not even salute without difficulty suggested doubt of their efficacy within the military. Additionally, comics such as this one suggested that the presence of the female body as well as the addition of female sexuality into the military lifestyle would serve as more of a distraction, which could waste time better used focusing on the war at hand, further damaging the effectiveness of not only the servicewomen but the military at large. Assumptions such as this ignored the valuable addition of female support towards the war effort.<sup>70</sup>

Advertisements also capitalized on the female sexuality of servicewomen to promote their products. Companies often featured soldiers in advertisements, which proved to be a valuable technique, both capturing the attention of the members of the armed services as well as

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<sup>69</sup>Herman, "Winnie the Wac," *Life*, 12.

<sup>70</sup>Bill Ruble, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, September 2, 1944, 77.

the greater American population eager to support the war effort. Daniel Delis Hill in his book *Advertising to the American Woman, 1900-1999* asserted that advertisements often featured military personnel because, “the hero became an anonymous but significant endorser of the brand.” The use of military themes within advertising during wartime helped to further legitimize the product in question by giving a patriotic edge. Sex also served as a powerful advertising tool. According to Tom Reichert in his article “The Ageless Allure: Sex, Media, and Marketing,” sex not only captures consumers attention, “sex is often used in advertising as a brand benefit.” In other words people see sex as something to be gained from the purchase of whichever product. Logic would suggest that advertisers would combine the two techniques and the sexualized servicewoman served as a perfect vehicle for this. An Everyday Battery advertisement from 1945 depicted a soldier on patrol duty, shining his flashlight on an *extremely* sexualized Wac. (See Figure 16) The two men exclaim, “Now there’s a Sergeant who commands attention and gets it!” all while shining a flashlight on her rear end. Obviously, this had nothing to do with the quality of the batteries, nor did it depict a realistic military situation. However, combining sex and the military within advertisements presented the idea of the sexualized and objectified servicewoman within the minds of the general public. Similarly, Kleenex tissues printed an advertisement featuring a beautiful Wac, holding a tissue. The label above the Wac read “War Blonde.” An obvious play on words, this advertisement also had nothing to do with the tissues themselves and instead employed the use of the sexualized servicewoman to sell products. Although companies obviously fabricated these images and situations in order to sell their products, it still provided the public with the notion that servicewomen exuded sexuality, which contributed to growing public concerns.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>Daniel Delis Hill, *Advertising to the American Woman, 1900-1999* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2002), 250; Tom Reichert, “The Ageless Allure: Sex, Media, and Marketing,” in *Investigating the Use of Sex*

## **Servicewomen and Romance**

As the popular media represented women as both deviant from traditional gender roles and as sexual beings, the media also began to address what romantic relationships may look like between a man, civilian or military, and a servicewoman. As previously noted, the military made it very clear within its literature that it did not expect women to continue to serve after the culmination of the war, but instead intended that they would return to their homes and pursue a “normal” life of marriage and a family. Many articles highlighted these notions that the female soldiers inherently desired attention from and relationships with the opposite sex.

Advertisements and military literature emphasized servicewomen’s dedication to the maintenance of their beauty, supposedly for the purpose of attracting men. A 1944 recruitment brochure, *A Book of Facts About the WAC*, stated, “Army [WAC] officers consider the normal feminine beauty routine just as important to a Wac as Army training.” Even the Army believed that servicewomen should keep up with societal beauty norms, both to maintain femininity and to maintain attractiveness for potential suitors, so that a Wac might cultivate a relationship with a man in the future. A Tangee Lipstick advertisement printed in *Ladies’ Home Journal* in 1944 read, “We are still the weaker sex. It’s still up to us to appear as alluring and lovely as possible.” (See Figure 17) The advertisement featured portraits of the different servicewomen surrounding a portrait of the company spokeswoman, indicating that the company’s message specifically targeted women serving in the military. The advertisement continued to offer, “Whether you’re in or out of uniform, you’ll want to be completely appealing and feminine.” This indicated that pressure existed for female soldiers to appear “as alluring and lovely as possible” to attract a potential mate. The advertisement also compared servicewomen with men stating that women,

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*in Media Promotion and Advertising*, ed. Tom Reichert (Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press Inc., 2007), 6-7; Everyday Batteries, advertisement, *Collier’s Weekly*, June 30, 1945, 49; Kleenex Facial Tissues, advertisement, *Collier’s Weekly*, February 6, 1943, 4.

military or not, constituted the “weaker sex,” which would logically leave males as the stronger sex. This statement removed servicewomen from their controversial place in society and returned them to the social elevation with which the public felt more comfortable. Society wanted to hear that servicewomen still maintained their femininity and that they did not feel that their new positions within the military allowed them to supersede men or forgo traditional family life. In order to take the first step in starting a family, a woman must first secure a beau, and both the Army and make-up companies saw the maintenance of beauty routines as a way to ensure that a servicewoman, despite her contentious occupation, could find herself a suitable match.<sup>72</sup>

Many articles accentuated the fact that servicewomen sought out and maintained relationships despite their military status. One article noted that Wacs “enjoy[ed] having their pick of dates” among the servicemen, proving that Wacs engaged in normal courtship activities and sustained interest in pursuing a relationship. Similarly, a photo-spread printed in 1943 entitled, “Marriage in a Hurry,” featured several vignettes of couples for whom wartime pressure had forced a hasty wedding. One of these included a Wave who had married a civilian due to her upcoming deployment. This photograph proved that despite her occupation she was still capable of and desired marriage. More importantly, it showed that her position in the military had not put off potential suitors and that men would desire to marry servicewomen as they would civilians. In her article, “When the Girls Come Home,” printed towards the end of the war in 1945, Ruth Carson wrote about how the SPARS offered programs to teach the female soldiers home skills while they still served within the military. The author asserted, “For their aim is to get married and they know what competition is.” The main photograph for the article pictured a man reclining in a lounge chair, while a smiling woman, presumably a Spar, vacuumed the floor

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<sup>72</sup> Women’s Army Corps, *A Book of Facts about the WAC*, 17; Tangee Lipsticks, advertisement, *Ladies’ Home Journal*, September 1944, 122.

around him. The article also reported that the SPARS issued their members an instructional brochure entitled “Cooking for Two.” The Coast Guard clearly cared that its servicewomen remain desirable to potential mates and that they learned the skills society deemed necessary to be considered attractive partners. Despite trepidations that men would forgo servicewomen as candidates for marriage, servicewomen maintained their eligibility as potential wives, and their military service did not inherently quash their desire for marriage and a family.<sup>73</sup>

Although many media representations of servicewomen depicted them as ready and willing to pursue marriage and settle down after the war ended, other representations, mostly in cartoons or comics, played upon society’s fears and depicted the servicewomen as mannish and therefore unlikely to find companions of the opposite sex. A 1944 comic depicted two Wacs observing another Wac and commenting, “There goes Alice- playing hard to get!” The Wac they referred to paced back and forth carrying a rifle complete with bayonet and wore a sour, stern look on her face. In this comic, the artist depicted the Wac in question as adopting aggressive qualities from her time in the military. This aggression supposedly would make her undesirable as a female. Society proscribed nurturing characteristics onto females as an ideal and this comic played upon fears that military service would transform women into hardened and aggressive soldiers instead of the caring and loving mothers the public expected. Corporal Barney Tobey penned a comic in 1944 that expanded on these fears. The scene pictured an Army jeep with a male officer and a large mannish looking Wac. The caption read, “Remember, Captain Warren, my men haven’t seen a woman in a year.” Presumably, the soldiers would want to see an attractive woman since they had been isolated from women for so long. The irony the artist intended jested at the fact that the first woman the soldiers would see did not look like a woman

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<sup>73</sup>“Wacs in Africa,” *Collier’s Weekly*, 16; Harry Henderson and Sam Shaw, “Marriage in a Hurry,” *Collier’s Weekly*, July 17, 1943, 23; Ruth Carson, “When the Girls Come Home,” *Collier’s Weekly*, April 21, 1945, 21.

at all. The artist suggested that women in the military no longer appeared as women, but rather resembled or had adopted many of the qualities of male soldiers. Another comic printed in 1943 featured a Wac and a male soldier on what appeared to be a romantic date night. The Wac said to the soldier, “When you look at me like that I feel like a woman again.” (See Figure 18) This also conveyed the idea that military women were not really women and therefore not romantically desirable. In this case, the soldier’s gaze reverted the Wac from her status as soldier back to a woman, which allowed her to again feel alluring to the opposite sex. These comics depicted women as if they had lost their essential womanhood and with it the capacity to attract suitors, representing the fears among the general public that military service would transform servicewomen into masculine beings that no one would want to eventually marry.<sup>74</sup>

Comics also depicted confusion as to how women in the military and their military habits would upset dating and marriage scripts. Most of these comics referred to relationships between a servicewoman and another member of the military. For example, a 1944 comic depicted Army men trying to pick up a date at the pool. The caption read, “We better approach her carefully she might be a superior officer.” Depicting a comical situation, this cartoon highlighted the broader idea that the addition of servicewomen to the war effort had indeed disrupted dating norms for military men. This gave way to new concerns, such as the woman in question holding a higher military ranking and the dilemma of how one should address a woman of a higher status. Prior to World War II, this would not have been an issue and comics such as this drew inspiration off of the confusion that arose as society tried to reconcile these women into established dating scripts. Another 1943 cartoon illustrating absurdity in military women’s courtship pictured a soldier picking up a Waac for a date, flowers in tow. Instead of using a normal greeting, when the Waac

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<sup>74</sup>Lawrence Lariar, comic, *Collier’s Weekly*, July 29, 1944, 63; Corporal Barney Tobey, comic, *Collier’s Weekly*, September 16, 1944, 67; George Shellhase, comic, *Collier’s Weekly*, December 18, 1943, 82.

answered the door, the soldier saluted and said, “Private Wilson reporting for duty.” In this case, official protocol had spilled over from the military context into the personal relationship of the Waac and the soldier. It suggested that because now both parties served in the military, not just the man, that the military would heavily influence their relationship and the way they interacted, creating a distinction between the way a soldier would address a military woman versus a civilian one.<sup>75</sup>

In other examples, the woman’s military involvement and criticism disrupted the dating process. In his 1943 comic Gregory D’Alessio depicted a Waac and a male soldier on a romantic moonlit walk together when the Waac told her date, “I hate to bring this up, Lieutenant, but you’re out of step.” Prior to the addition of women into the military, a woman would not have known proper military habits to correct a male soldier on his execution, which could potentially cause friction within their relationship. Another 1943 cartoon suggested that a woman’s military involvement would affect not only her relationship with the soldiers she dated, but also would affect the soldier she married. Depicted in the comic, a Waac and a soldier walked back up the aisle from just getting married and the Waac ordered, “Hut, two, three, four.” Her military training had finally seeped into her married life as well. These comics emphasized the concern that women’s military involvement would negatively affect their romantic interactions, and ultimately their marriages to servicemen, and presumably to civilians as well.<sup>76</sup>

Comics also capitalized on the worry of the public that servicewomen would take on the roles that men traditionally held within romantic relationships. Since women in the military still constituted a new institution, the military had not yet updated its paperwork to account for these

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<sup>75</sup>Louis Priscilla, comic, *Collier’s Weekly*, August 5, 1944, 30; Jaro Fabry, comic, *Collier’s Weekly*, March 6, 1943, 30.

<sup>76</sup>Louis Priscilla, comic, *Collier’s Weekly*, August 5, 1944, 30; Jaro Fabry, comic, *Collier’s Weekly*, March 6, 1943, 30; Gregory D’Alessio, comic, *Collier’s Weekly*, February 13, 1943, 77; Jaro Fabry, comic, *Collier’s Weekly*, October 23, 1943, 36.

changes. For example, on official military forms, there was no blank for entering the name of a “Spouse.” Instead, the servicewoman would list her husband under the heading “Wife.” Of course, this occurred because in past years the spouse of the member of the military would have been a woman and, therefore, a wife. However, slight nuances in terminology such as this example paved the way for a public concern that servicewomen reversed gender roles entirely and effectively took on the role of the man and provider within the relationship. A 1944 comic showed a Wac and her husband at the box office of a theatre. A sign at the box office displayed a discounted price for servicemen and the Wac told the attendant, “-and one civilian husband.” (See Figure 19) The cartoon emphasized that she was the one procuring and paying for the tickets, while the husband stood passively behind her. Traditionally, the man took on the role of the provider, and dating and marriage scripts dictated that the man would pay for the woman’s ticket as well as his own. However, the woman’s job in the military had placed her in the position of power as a provider in the relationship, which increased concerns that women would overstep the boundaries that society had created.<sup>77</sup>

Other comics suggested that servicewomen stepped further out of bounds in regards to courtship and took on the traditionally male role as the pursuer. One 1943 comic depicted two Waacs walking past a male soldier. One of the Waacs eyed the male soldier and the other responded, “Don’t be a cad, Major.” Typically, a male would eye a female to decide whether or not to approach her, but in this case the woman initiated interaction and took an active role in the pursuit of a mate. Likewise, in a 1942 cartoon, one Waac at the telephone asked the other Waac if she had any more numbers to call to ask for a date. (See Figure 20) This clearly illustrated the servicewoman assuming the role of the pursuer in dating. She now called the men to ask them

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<sup>77</sup>Freling Foster, “Keeping Up With the World,” *Collier’s Weekly*, July 8, 1944, 6; Frank Brandt, comic, *Collier’s Weekly*, August 19, 1944, 75.



out, instead of waiting for a man to call her. Since military service differentiated the female soldier from other women, the comic suggested that a servicewoman's active role within the dating process resulted from her job within the traditionally masculine environment of the military.<sup>78</sup>

Concerns spread to include the fear that because women acquired more agency from their military experiences, the social hierarchy of marriage and the family would dissolve. A 1943 comic portrayed a Waac and a man at the altar about to get married. The Waac asked the officiant, "Now about the word 'obey,'" questioning whether servicewomen could truly subordinate to their husbands after holding a position within the military. This supposed disruption of social order served as the culmination of the public's concerns that servicewomen would usurp the roles within relationships that men traditionally held, such as the provider, the pursuer, the subordinate partner, and as the military forms absurdly listed, the husband altogether.<sup>79</sup>

As the military attempted to reconcile the addition of women into the traditionally masculine space, the female body became symbolic of servicewomen as deviant or the "other" within the military context and the male body and soldier as the norm. Representations of servicewomen as sexualized beings both served to discredit their legitimacy as soldiers and painted them as less threatening than their male counterparts. It also increased concerns about the morality of the servicewomen. Trepidations increased among the public that women's service within the military would disrupt the social order, particularly concerning courtship and marriage, between the female soldiers and the opposite sex. As a result, the public's fears about

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<sup>78</sup>Howard Baer, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, April 24, 1943, 51; Fritz Wilkinson, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, July 25, 1942, 26.

<sup>79</sup>R.C. Dell, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, May 15, 1943, 42.

the moral character of women in the military increased, culminating with the onset of the Slander Campaign in 1943.

## **Accusations and Opinions: The Slander Campaign and Public Response**

The addition of women into the military challenged traditional perceptions of what constituted an appropriate endeavor for American women. Confronted with these new opportunities for women, the public grappled with reconciling the idea of the female soldier, a woman assuming a historically masculine role, with preexisting gender scripts. Extensive media coverage of servicewomen provided the public with a window into the lives of the new soldiers and allowed society to formulate opinions. The media not only provided information to the public about the new branches but also became a forum for public discourse concerning the servicewomen. Fear of change and a societal double standard of expectations for men and women resulted in mass panic that these women violated more than just gender norms, but morality standards as well. Magazines, most notably *Newsweek*, published articles questioning the morality of the servicewomen during what scholars have coined the Slander Campaign. A shift existed in the ways that popular media and recruitment efforts presented the servicewomen to the American public. As an overall trend, depictions of servicewomen, particularly Wacs in the beginning of the war highlighted their daily activities and duties. Later, responses designed to debunk the Slander Campaign took on a tone of reassurance that these women still remained respectable females and that their military service in no way compromised their propriety.<sup>80</sup>

### **The Ubiquitous Media Presence**

From the start of the WAAC, servicewomen attracted substantial media attention. Elizabeth R. Pollack, a private in the First Company of the Waac, mentioned in her letters to her

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<sup>80</sup>Scholars who use the term “Slander Campaign” include Mattie E. Treadwell in “The ‘Slander Campaign’” in *The Women’s Army Corps*, 191-218 and Leisa D. Meyer in “‘Ain’t Misbehavin’: The Slander Campaign Against the WAC” in *Creating G.I. Jane*, 33-50. Other mentions include Evelyn M. Monahan and Rosemary Neidel-Greenlee in *A Few Good Women*, 107-112.

family the overwhelming presence of the media in her training camp in Des Moines, Iowa.<sup>81</sup> Pollack highlighted the number of photographers and reporters that followed the new female soldiers, documenting their every move. Pollack wrote her letters in 1942, soon after the WAAC bill had been passed, illustrating the WAAC's relationship with the media from the beginning. The public was naturally curious about the newfound role of women in the military, and the popular media responded accordingly. Pollack never mentioned investigative reporters, just photographers for magazines, such as *Life*, *Liberty*, and *Collier's*.<sup>82</sup> These light, interesting magazines aimed towards a universal public audience provided information about and an accessible window into the lives of these female soldiers. Often, the articles would include spreads of photographs depicting the Waac lifestyle. A comic printed in *The New Yorker* spoke towards the ubiquitous presence of the media within training camps. The comic depicted a disgruntled soldier lying on his bed while photographers crouched around him snapping pictures. A nearby soldier commented, "If it ain't 'Life,' it's 'Time.' If it's not 'Time,' it's 'Fortune.'" Although this comic depicted male soldiers, it still demonstrated the thorough coverage of military activities during World War II. This comic suggested that the media had permeated every aspect of military life, including times set aside for relaxation. Although this comic illustrated the ubiquitous media presence it also showed that the media coverage the servicemen attracted did not seek to criticize them as was common throughout the media coverage of the servicewomen. Many Americans read these magazines, which raised awareness while satisfying the public's curiosity about these new female soldiers.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>Fort Des Moines, Iowa served as the first training camp renovated for the use of the Waac. The first class of officers began their training on July 20, 1942. Other camps were set up in Daytona Beach, Fort Oglethorpe, and Fort Devens.

<sup>82</sup>These three publications were popular publications at the time and were read widely in American society.

<sup>83</sup>Elizabeth R. Pollack, "Yes Ma'am!: The Personal Papers of a Waac Private," in Judy Barrett Litoff and David C. Smith, eds., *American Women in a World at War: Contemporary Accounts from World War II*

## The Slander Campaign

The public found it difficult to accept the newly formed female branches, due to what they believed constituted a blatant deviation from the expected gender norms placed upon women to stay at home and raise a family. The Slander Campaign that primarily focused on the WAC consisted of ignorant and hasty judgments. Much of the panic that arose from women entering the military originated from the notion that the women in the military would be treated exactly like the male soldiers, when in reality they would not be. In fact, a double standard existed within the structure of the military regulations, allowing men a more lax moral code. Although the public generally frowned upon promiscuity, society seemed to make special allowances for male soldiers, turning a blind eye to their activities and maintaining a “boys will be boys” outlook on the situation. The public, concerned that the same laid back attitude would be transferred to the female soldiers, jumped to the far-fetched conclusions that the servicewomen actually served as prostitutes, rounded up to satisfy the male soldiers’ needs and boost morale. People also worried that the Army would issue prophylactics and birth control to Wacs, which would encourage immoral behavior and sexual independence. Many feared that women who were willing to leave their families and pursue military careers alongside other women were homosexuals and that the large group of “mannish” women would set the stage for increased deviant sexual activity.<sup>84</sup>

Many of the accusations of bad behavior on the part of the servicewomen were misconceptions that had potential to evolve into scandals branding the female soldiers as immoral. In one case, an Army recruitment officer in Louisiana reported seeing several intoxicated Wacs leaving a bar in the company of men. Further investigation showed these

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(Wilmington: DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1997), 41-42, 45; Peter Armo, comic, *The New Yorker*, September 13, 1941, 20.

<sup>84</sup>Meyer, *Creating G.I. Jane*, 34; Treadwell, *The Women's Army Corps*, 625.

women to be members of a civilian organization with similar uniforms. Overly exaggerated rumors, which were often false, severely damaged the way the public thought of the women willing to join the military. The military expected servicewomen to uphold moral standards, but as previously noted, cartoons drawn of the servicewomen often over accentuated their female sexuality. These representations reduced the soldiers to sexual objects, which influenced the way the public viewed these women. Letters written by men during the time period disclose that the Wacs were not considered respectable women; some men include threats to disown their female relatives if they joined the WAC. Rumors of moral turpitude within the ranks circulated throughout the media, creating a daunting task for the female branches, which strove to build a positive public image.<sup>85</sup>

The culmination of these fears manifested in the Slander Campaign, which began on June 14, 1943. An article appeared in *Newsweek* titled “Waac Whispers,” which brought to the public’s attention the scandalous question of whether the Waacs were engaging in immoral activity. The article questioned the judgment of sending Waacs abroad based on questionable accounts that groups of Waacs were engaging in licentious behavior, resulting in several pregnancies. Congresswoman Rogers, the woman who originally advocated for the inclusion of women in the military, argued against these accusations, claiming that the WAAC had discharged only one member of the company in question for a pregnancy, and she was married. Though the accusations proved false, a widely read, reputable news magazine released them, which instilled public doubt about the morality of the Waacs. The article took a negative tone towards the Waacs, portraying them as helpless, morally compromised females who would succumb to the slightest temptation abroad.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Treadwell, *The Women’s Army Corps*, 195-201.

<sup>86</sup> “Waac Whispers,” *Newsweek*, June 14, 1943, microfilm.

In its next weekly issue, *Newsweek* again featured the Waacs, with the article “Waac Rumors,” which again questioned the morality of women as it related to their sexuality. The article presented a previous claim that according to John O’Donnell, a reporter for the *New York Daily News* and his “secret” sources, the military provided Waacs prophylactics and birth control freely, despite marital status. This again suggested that women would succumb easily to sexual temptation, damaging the image of the Waacs. The article printed Col. Oveta Culp Hobby’s immediate reaction to this slander, telling the world that the WAAC would not provide birth control to the female soldiers. The Army already provided prophylactics to their male counterparts, making this rumor easy to believe for those who were aware of existing distribution efforts within the military. This again brought into question the morality of the Waacs. Slandorous gossip developed from these rumors, which manifest in letters, as the public already displayed a wary attitude to the Waacs. People began to question what would keep the Waacs from developing more promiscuous habits, as male soldiers had. With these rumors circulating in the public’s ears and printed for their eyes, the Waac suffered as the public opinion of them dropped, along with the number of women who were willing to enlist.<sup>87</sup>

### **Tracking Public Opinion Through the Media**

Even prior to the Slander Campaign, the femininity of the Wacs became a public issue throughout the media. Magazines not only printed the articles and features that debated the inclusion of women in the military, but also provided a space for the public to write in and share personal opinions on the matter. Often media coverage was divided, polarizing those who supported the female branches and those who thought they challenged tradition. The *Saturday Evening Post* printed an article by Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior under Franklin

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<sup>87</sup>“Waac Rumors,” *Newsweek*, June 21, 1943, microfilm; Meyer, *Creating G.I. Jane*, 33-35.

Delano Roosevelt, entitled, “Watch Out for the Women,” on February 20, 1943.<sup>88</sup> Although it did not mention women in the military specifically, Ickes warned of an impending drastic change in the acceptable place for women in society based on their new wartime professional opportunities. Ickes postulated that after the war, women would no longer be content with simply settling down and starting a family, an idea he found disturbing. Mrs. Guy C. Hendry wrote a response to Ickes’ article that appeared on April 17, 1943, in the “Keeping Posted” section of the magazine. In a short paragraph, Hendry described an interaction she had with a group of Waacs, out in “military manner,” who all disregarded their ranks when they saw a baby, ”cooing and baby-talking in the traditional feminine manner.” The author affirmed the femininity of the Waacs in her account; however, the fact that a relatively simple account would get published, prolonging the magazine’s discourse on the issue, showed that the femininity of these women in the military, along with the changing gender norms, represented controversial issues that magazine editors believed people would want to read about. It also demonstrated that members of the public harbored an interest in the servicewomen and cared enough to submit their opinions and contribute to a nationwide discussion.<sup>89</sup>

Opinion sections also allowed for the vocalization of public opinions, both positive and negative. As previously noted, Mrs. Hendry took the time to write to *The Saturday Evening Post* about her positive impression of Waacs. Milton Bracker submitted a poem that *The Saturday Evening Post* printed in the “Post Scripts” section on November 7, 1942. The speaker of the poem told of how “My girl’s the kind who’s sure to join/ Each new organization,/ So she’s off to Fort DesMoines/ To help defend the nation.” Bracker poked literary fun at the Waacs,

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<sup>88</sup>Harold L. Ickes served as the Secretary of the Interior under the administration of Franklin Roosevelt. His prominent place in political culture provides insight to how the “old boys” in Washington DC viewed the shifting gender roles.

<sup>89</sup>Harold L. Ickes, “Watch out for the Women,” *The Saturday Evening Post*, February 20, 1943, 19-20; Mrs. Guy C. Hendry, “Waac-A-Bye-Baby,” *The Saturday Evening Post*, April 17, 1943, 4.



insinuating that they were just some new fad of an organization, using a tone that did not afford the Waac the respect of a legitimate branch of the military. The speaker goes on to call himself a “lackey” since his Waac left, a derogatory term for a servant. Perhaps the duties his partner left behind for him, such as housework, reminded him of domestic labor. He closed the poem saying he thought he was the one going “Wacky.” The idea that a woman would leave the home and join the military did indeed seem “Wacky” to some, considering that up until the demands of the war effort, society did not expect women to work outside of the home. Bracker also highlighted the concern that women would abandon their household work to pursue non-traditional work outside the home, which would leave the men to take over the women’s work, suggesting a complete gender role reversal. The disruption from the traditional gender roles upset many people who were not ready yet for change, and they spun exaggerated scenarios of spiraling effects, such as the relation of a man performing domestic chores to a household servant. Bracker left the reader thinking of the Waac as a joke organization, which ultimately made a man’s home life more difficult. Societal resistance to change drove this negative attitude that Bracker captured in his poem.<sup>90</sup>

Advice columns also served as a vehicle for the public to express their concerns with the new occupations available for women. During World War II, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote a regular section in *Ladies’ Home Journal* titled, “If You Ask Me....” Readers submitted questions, which the First Lady answered, including concerns about servicewomen. In January 1943, a reader asked if Roosevelt shared the feeling that if women put on a Waac or Wave uniform, they would be “aping men.” Roosevelt replied that this was an “utterly ridiculous statement,” reminding the reader that the uniforms were different for men and women. The underlying trepidation of the

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<sup>90</sup>Hendry, “Waac-A-Bye-Baby,” *The Saturday Evening Post*, 4; Milton Bracker, “Where is my Wandering Waac Tonight?” *The Saturday Evening Post*, November 7, 1942, 30.

reader suggested that women would be mocking men and masculinity as they entered the Army. As previously noted, the uniform served as an important symbol of the female soldier. Appearances also helped to maintain the status quo, accounting for why the reader seemed altogether more concerned about women wearing a masculine outfit as opposed to joining the Army all together.<sup>91</sup>

Mrs. Roosevelt responded to a question asking her opinion of the “terribly unfair” stories of Waac immorality in an issue later that year. She assured the reader that “morality among the Waacs is very high.” The fact that the reader even felt the need for reassurance from the First Lady indicated some level of trepidation amongst the general public. The reader’s summation of the rumors as “terribly unfair” also alluded to some mixed opinions within the public concerning the morality of the Waacs. This reader expressed support for the servicewomen, despite the negative rumors circulating. These negative rumors, however, affected male support of women joining the military. In May 1944, a reader asked Roosevelt why the women’s branches of the Armed services had not filled their quotas. Roosevelt claimed that women had responsibilities in the home, which deterred them from joining. She also offered the reason that “men do not encourage their wives, sisters, or sweethearts to join.” This lack of male support suggested that men did not feel comfortable with the women in their lives enlisting, insinuating a negative view of the female branches. Evident in the previous questions submitted, the public already felt wary of women stepping outside their traditional spheres, and their distrust worsened as accusations about the Waacs spread.<sup>92</sup>

As a result, their friends, neighbors, and relatives discouraged women from enlisting out of fear of the negative connotations that would accompany their new position. Letters conveyed

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<sup>91</sup>Eleanor Roosevelt, “If You Ask Me...” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, January 1943, 31.

<sup>92</sup>Eleanor Roosevelt, “If You Ask Me...” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, August 1943, 39; Eleanor Roosevelt, “if You Ask Me...” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, May 1944, 30.

negative attitudes toward women serving in the military. Mattie Treadwell, a former Wac, printed many letters and notes written by Army servicemen in her monograph *The Women's Army Corps*. An overwhelming majority of the correspondences portrayed the Wacs in a bad light, often offering scathing criticism. Brazen comments such as, "You join the WAVES or the WAC and you are automatically a prostitute in my opinion" and "a woman's place is in the home" frequent the passages Treadwell selected. Another note offered the advice: "Ruth asked about the Wacs. The idea is noble but the widespread attitude of the public is narrow and bad. So I definitely don't recommend it." Treadwell included these letters in the chapter of her book about the Slander Campaign in order to illustrate its effects on recruitment. These harsh views concerning the women soldiers were formed through exaggerated rumors, such as those the Slander Campaign perpetuated, circulated throughout the public. Multiple times, speakers threatened to disown their female relatives if they enlisted in the WAC. Other letters questioned the servicewomen's marital eligibility once they finished their time in the military. One letter stated, "I don't want any wife, or future wife, of mine joining [the WAC]." Since marriage still remained a life goal for many women, these assertions undoubtedly deterred many women from enlisting. One letter went further saying, "I think it is best that he and Edith are separating, because after she gets out of the service she won't be worth a dime...I would not have a girl or wife if she was in the service even if she was made of gold." Not only does this assert that military service put women at a disadvantage for finding a future husband, it also questioned the inherent worth of a woman who challenged traditional gender roles. This negative public opinion forced the WAC to boost its perceived legitimacy and create a better reputation. To cater to social norms, these depictions glossed over the work done by these women, in favor of showcasing their traditional sides.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>Treadwell, *The Women's Army Corps*, 212-213.

## **Refuting Negative Rumors**

Faced with widespread negativity amongst the public, the military needed to address these attitudes within their recruitment literature and reassure the public that joining the military would not jeopardize women's relationships with the men in their lives, particularly their fathers. A war propaganda poster printed in 1943, the same year as the Slander Campaign, illustrated an older gentleman sitting at his desk holding up a photograph of a Navy Wave, presumably his daughter. The caption of the poster read, "Proud—I'll say." The military attempted to refute the notion that male relatives would not support their daughters, sisters, or wives joining the military. As the letters printed in Treadwell's monograph suggested, many male relatives did feel very strongly that their female relatives should not enlist in the military. In response, the military had to offer reassurance that this would not be the case, that families would take pride in women's service, in order to ensure that female enlistment would not taper off entirely. A WAC recruitment brochure printed in 1944, well after the Slander Campaign, took a similar tone. A section in the brochure labeled, "What Wacs Think of Their Lives and Their Jobs," printed personal accounts of various Wacs about their experiences in the service. The brochure quoted Private First Class Mary Hazel Kirk giving examples of memorable aspects of her time in the service, including, "the letters I get from the person I love more than anyone in the world, my dad, saying 'I'm proud of you.'" The military deliberately chose accounts such as this one to show the public that female service did not necessarily represent societal disgrace, but rather a point of pride for their families, particularly the male members of families. These representations

of the proud father directly contradicted the negative attitudes evident in letters and the popular media that permeated public opinion.<sup>94</sup>

Civilians also refuted negative rumors through the popular media. The editors of *Collier's Weekly* wrote an editorial in 1944 titled, "Wanted: More Wacs." The editors reassured that "the snickers which greeted the original Women's Auxiliary Army Corps were based on misinformation." The editors continued to offer, "The whispers about moral turpitude in the outfit have long since proved baseless." The fact that the editors still addressed the rumors propagated through the Slander Campaign over six months later proved that the public still harbored concerns. The editorial also suggested that these fears prevented women from joining, thus requiring the editors to step in and refute them. The author Octavus Ray Cohen asserted to the public that in regards to women joining the military, "the most anticipated problems ceased to be problems," reassuring society, even prior to the Slander Campaign, that it had nothing to fear from women joining the military.<sup>95</sup>

### **Idealizing the Servicewoman**

A shift occurred in the representations of servicewomen within popular media in the wake of the Slander Campaign. Increasingly, articles replaced real life photographs of day-to-day activities of the female soldiers with a more idealized image of the servicewoman. On January 8, 1944, the *Saturday Evening Post* printed a series of pictures entitled "This Woman's Army." The feature presented a collection of vignettes drawn by Al Parker, who was recognized as "a noted glamourizer of the American girl." Each of the pictures showed typical Wac activities with explanatory captions beneath. Parker did show the women doing mechanic work and exercises;

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<sup>94</sup>John Phillip Falter, "Proud- I'll Say," recruitment poster, (Washington DC: United States Navy, 1943), <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/90715008/> (accessed February 19, 2014); Women's Army Corps, *A Book of Facts about the WAC*, 24.

<sup>95</sup>"Wanted: More Wacs," editorial, *Collier's Weekly*, January 15, 1944, 66; Octavus Ray Cohen, "The Lady's a Soldier," *Collier's Weekly*, October 10, 1942, 54.

however, he more frequently depicted them in heavily idealized situations. Parker painted the Wacs baking cherry pies, catching a bus for a shopping trip, and socializing casually at military monuments. (See Figure 22) In an attempt to quell public unrest, this suggested the continued normalcy in the Wacs' lives. Parker also showed Wacs worshipping in a chapel, suggesting a common sense of morality within the ranks. Parker lived up to the claim of being a "glamourizer" as he took daily activities of life and translated them into picturesque little scenes, resembling more of a post card than a military base.<sup>96</sup>

Ernest O. Hauser, a reporter for *The Saturday Evening Post*, penned an article on the Wacs that appeared in the magazine on September 9, 1944, affirming the femininity of the Wacs. He gathered personal accounts from several different Wacs with the aim to assure the American public that the Wacs were maintaining their feminine qualities. Hauser took a very condescending, chauvinistic tone when describing the Wacs, referring to them as "little Wacs" or "girls" instead of women. He even commented on their "feminine ingenuity" in reference to making sandwiches with a flat iron. Throughout the article, Hauser constantly used the word "feminine" in describing the Wacs. He took care to mention that Wacs had boyfriends and commented on their wardrobe choices. He wrote an entire paragraph detailing the "feminine nonessentials" such as high-heeled shoes, lipstick, and frilly underwear that the Wacs requested. The article did not explicitly show what work the Wacs did for the war effort and put its main focus on the femininity of these women, despite being involved in the traditionally masculine sphere of the military. Hauser, writing for *Life*, responded to the concerns of the American public that Wacs should maintain their femininity while assuming their new roles in the Army.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>Al Parker, "This Woman's Army," *The Saturday Evening Post*, January 8, 1944, 26-27.

<sup>97</sup>Ernest O. Hauser, "Those Wonderful G.I. Janes," *The Saturday Evening Post*, September 9, 1944, 26-27, 60, 63.

Resistance to change and fear of the unknown served to perpetuate rumors of illicit conduct within the ranks of the newly formed female branches of the military during World War II. The Slander Campaign attacked the morality of the Waacs specifically, but also affected the public opinion of the other women's branches. Letters as well as the popular media reflected the discourse concerning the behavior and public reception of women involved in the military. The media's coverage of the servicewomen provided the public with the forum necessary to shape their opinions. The deviation from tradition encouraged the public, already resistant to change, to develop negative attitudes towards the servicewomen. The media depicted polarized opinions, giving examples of those who thought the Wacs to be immoral along with those who insisted that the Wacs maintained their femininity, despite their masculine choice of occupation. The media also showed the shift in the public's opinion of the servicewomen throughout the war. Ultimately, the war ended and the women were returned to their homes, and traditional morals ascended in the priorities of the American public. All of this public confusion regarding the morality of the female soldiers resulted from the challenge they presented to traditional gender norms. The dual expectations that servicewomen both maintain their femininity while also conforming to a masculine environment caused public confusion as to where these women fit within societal constructs. The fear of the unknown as women occupy new spaces within society, particularly the military, still affects women serving within the military today just as it affected the new servicewomen during World War II.

## **Conclusion**

World War II marked a revolutionary point in American gender history. For the first time society tolerated women within the workforce, but it also encouraged, if not demanded, that women leave their homes in order to hasten the war effort. The traditionally male dominated sphere of the military was no exception. The military also had to conscript the help of American women. However, despite the immediate need for women to fill these roles, society did not immediately embrace the servicewomen because they upset the acceptable gender norms of American society.

In order to combat this fear of change, the military walked a fine line between gender expectations in order to introduce the concept of the female soldier to the public, resulting in conflicting messages for the servicewomen. On one hand, the smooth integration of women into the military required some sort of equality with the male soldiers. In certain branches, women held the same positions and received equal pay as that of their male counterparts, although commanding female officers never achieved ranks as high as their male counterparts. On the other hand, the military emphasized that the female soldier still retained her feminine qualities. Joining the military did not require a woman to forsake her gender altogether.

In fact, the military tended to uphold traditional gender scripts, especially when it came to the duties assigned to women. Although wartime opportunities existed for women to serve in non-traditional sectors, such as mechanical work, for the most part, the military made it clear that women would be taking over mostly clerical positions. Women had served in clerical positions within the civilian sector for some time at that point, so the idea of a female secretary appeared less offensive than the image of a gruff female marching with a gun. Recruitment campaigns, such as “Your Duty Ashore, His Afloat,” drew even clearer lines of distinction between what the



military considered an acceptable role for a man as opposed to a woman. Making these distinctions served to restore some traditional order to a situation where accepted norms seemingly turned upside down.<sup>98</sup>

The image of the servicewoman who embraced her feminine identity yet denied it in favor of assuming the role of an American soldier created a confusing expectation for women entering into the new female branches. This was the first time the military included women within its ranks in an official capacity, and no perfect template existed for the new position; rather, the military dealt largely with the unknown. The military had to reconcile the pressures of traditional gender expectations with an extreme need for additional soldiers in order to create this new opportunity for women, while presenting this opportunity to the public in a way that was palatable. The military expected women to perform as females within a masculine context; servicewomen were still women, yet they also had to embody masculine qualities in order to fit into the male dominated sphere. Creating this new space, the military had to adjust some of its traditional facets in order to allow for the introduction of women, one of these facets being the uniform.

The uniforms designed for the servicewomen of World War II embodied and symbolized the struggle of maintaining dual gender expectations. The female uniforms had to resemble the male uniforms enough that the women would still be recognized as American soldiers, yet also had to conform to female fashion standards so as not to create controversy. A separate uniform proved necessary in order to allow for the feminine figure to fit into the existing uniform standards. The military, as a result, deliberately designed the uniforms to be “functional yet feminine.” Enlisting the help of designers, such as Mainbocher, the new branches produced

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<sup>98</sup> Floherty, “Your Duty Ashore...His Afloat: SPARS.”

female versions that blended aesthetically with the male uniforms. These uniforms allowed for women to serve effectively within the military but also retained feminine elements of dress. For example, the military chose a skirted uniform with pants available as an option for positions or tasks that would require increased mobility. Putting the servicewomen in skirts clearly identified them as females, yet the design and color scheme was reminiscent of the male uniforms, signifying them as soldiers. Because the uniforms entailed such compromise, they perfectly illustrate the dual expectations of gender the military held for the servicewomen. The uniforms had to fulfill dual gender expectations as well: accentuating the soldiers' femininity but also allowing for military order.<sup>99</sup>

The new uniforms soon became the focus of popular media coverage and in a way became a new fashion symbol, representing female commitment to the war effort. Advertisements hailed the new designs as the "best styles of the year!" Makeup companies also began to develop products that would match the new uniforms and would fall under military regulations concerning how much makeup the servicewomen could wear. The media attention that the new uniforms garnered created the uniform as a prominent image of the new female soldier. Some women even based their decision of which branch to sign up for based on the uniforms they would be wearing. The uniforms designed for the servicewomen fulfilled several important functions. First, they served as identifiers, separating female servicewomen from other female organizations and females within the civilian workforce. Second, they represent the attempt on the military's part to reconcile the female figure within the masculine space, allowing for female dress while still respecting the uniform standards that were already in place for men.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>"WAVES Uniform," *Life*, 49.

<sup>100</sup>Fashion Frocks, "The Two Best Styles of the Year," *Ladies' Home Journal*, 115.

The uniform represented the conjunction of the feminine with military practice, and it also symbolized the efforts of integrating the female body and female sexuality, concepts seen as out of place, into the military context. As a former Wave explained in her memoirs, the Navy found difficulty in reconciling the female body with the military uniform. Females had been largely absent in past military conflicts, so the female body was largely seen as out of place within the military sphere. Comics often saw levity in servicewomen grappling with military tradition and the female experience. Many comics depicted servicewomen saluting and their skirts rising up to a questionable height, something male soldiers in pants never had to confront. One comic even found humor in a woman training for a guard position and having to unlearn her fear of strangers approaching her at night, minimizing the threat of assault that females disproportionately face.<sup>101</sup>

Visual representations of servicewomen also often overemphasized their sexuality through the depictions of the female body. Comics depicted servicewomen with enlarged breasts and even suggested that breasts interfered with military functions, such as the awarding of medals. Sexualized servicewomen were also seen as a distraction to male soldiers and these images would later contribute to the public concern with servicewomen's morality. The idea that servicewomen exuded sexuality and that the lax moral standards applied to male soldiers would carry over to the servicewomen later resulted in the Slander Campaign.<sup>102</sup>

Along with the concern of morality among the ranks of female soldiers came the uncertainty of how these servicewomen would fit into existing scripts for relationships with the opposite sex. The military made it very clear that it expected these women to cease military service after the culmination of the war and eventually get married and settle down with a

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<sup>101</sup>Rose, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, 33; Ruble, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, 77.

<sup>102</sup>Herman, "Winnie the Wac," *Life*, 12.

family. The military did not want to disrupt the gender structure as it pertained to marriage and the family and in fact barred women with children under a certain age from enlisting. Comics, however, presented images of servicewomen in romantic relationships and often exaggerated the potential effects of military service on relationships with the opposite sex. Often, comics made it seem as if military habits would become so ingrained in the servicewomen that they would not be able to separate their professional lives from their personal ones, especially if their significant others also served in the military. Scenarios often included a male and female soldier together on a date where the female soldier brings up military practice or criticizes the man's military habits, such as reminding him he is out of step. In these scenarios, military service had seeped into all areas of the woman's life, playing off a public fear that women would no longer be desirable for marriage after service.<sup>103</sup>

Concerns also grew as society tried to figure out the structure of dominance that would exist in a relationship with a servicewoman. Many comics illustrated that confusion existed about whether the men still approached females or whether the females would be calling up the men for dates. Some even played off of the fear that women would supplant men as the providers within the relationships. All of these images directly contradicted the image that the military tried so hard to project that servicewomen still retained their femininity. These comics presented the public with potential fears about the servicewomen, fears where women had transformed into "men" as a result of their military service.

The Slander Campaign, emerging in July of 1943, represented the culmination of public concern towards the servicewomen: concerns that arose from a gender based double standard. When an article printed that the Waacs would receive Army-issued prophylactics, panic arose as

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<sup>103</sup>Fabry, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, March 6, 1943, 30; D'Alessio, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, 77; Fabry, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, October 23, 1943, 36.

the public questioned the morality of these women. However, this only presented itself as a concern *because* they were women. The Army issued prophylactics to male soldiers and no one so much as batted an eye. In fact, the military held servicewomen to stricter standards. The Slander Campaign attempted to discredit the servicewomen for stepping outside their gender roles and entering into a largely masculine sphere. Despite the military's attempts to present a hybrid gendered soldier, one who remained feminine while still performing equally with men, the presence of women in the service still violated societal norms for women, sparking social criticism.<sup>104</sup>

Although the military created the WAC, the WAVES, the SPARS, and the Marines as designated female branches, eventually the larger male branches absorbed the female branches in favor of a gender integrated military. The WAVES and the Marines soon gave way to women serving in the regular Navy and Marine Corps after World War II after the Women's Armed Services Integration Act in 1948. However, the women's branch of the Army continued functioning as a separate entity until the military disbanded it in 1978 and all members became part of comparable divisions in the Army. The SPARS as an organization disbanded after World War II. Very few women worked within the Coast Guard and the Women's Armed Services Integration Act does not ever mention the Coast Guard. The women's reserve of the Coast Guard finally disbanded after a congressional act in 1973. The disintegration of the female branches marked the end of an important era in American military history. For the first time, the military had reconciled female presence within its ranks, paving the way for a permanent female role within the American military<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup>“Waac Rumors, *Newsweek*.”

<sup>105</sup>Susan H. Godson, *Serving Proudly: A History of Women in the U.S. Navy* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 167-168; Bettie J. Morden, *The Women's Army Corps, 1945-1978* (Washington DC: Center

Even today in 2014, women within the military still constitute a hot topic within public discourse. As of January 2013, the armed services have been ordered to open all combat positions to qualifying women by January 2016. In fact, the first three female Marines passed infantry training in November of 2013. Interesting to note, these women are not yet headed to combat position: they are still bound towards non-combat jobs for the time being. One can only wonder why, after given the go-ahead the military would still want to keep women away from the front lines. This is indicative of further questioning about the “appropriate” roles of women in the military, reminiscent of the division of female and male duties from World War II. This also shows that gender norms still stand in the way of women achieving military advancement. This is not to claim that women have not made immense strides towards equality within the military since World War II. Women have achieved remarkable feats and taken on a plethora of roles not available for women in World War II. However, the military still has steps to take until it can claim full gender equality, and allowing women into combat positions would constitute a big step.<sup>106</sup>

Fears seen today about involving women in combat seem strangely familiar, echoing some of the same themes that plagued society during World War II. Similar to the introduction of women into the military in World War II, there has been considerable backlash against the introduction of women into combat positions. Robert Knight, a columnist for the *Washington Times*, claimed, “Women are not as physically strong, and they have an impact on the men around them. In a civilized society, men are raised to protect women. Now some of America’s

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for Military History, 1990), 395; “Women in the U.S. Coast Guard,” *Monkeyshines On America*, (May 2004): 28. *Primary Search*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 15, 2014).

<sup>106</sup>Matthew Cox, “Army Eyes New Standards for Women in Combat,” *Military.com News*, November 27, 2013, <http://www.military.com/daily-news/2013/11/27/army-eyes-new-standards-for-women-in-combat.html> (accessed February 15, 2014); Bill Briggs, “Women in combat: Three female Marines march into history by completing infantry training,” *NBC News*, November 20, 2013, <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/women-combat-three-female-marines-march-history-completing-infantry-training-v21553229> (accessed February 15, 2014).

elite warrior units train men to be indifferent to women's screams. That's what passes for 'progress' in a 'progressive' military." This comment proves the continued existence of sexist attitudes and skepticism of women serving within the military. It also points to the prevalence of traditional gender roles that are still in practice. Similar to the fears that the servicewomen in World War II would surpass their husbands as the providers, Knight argues that women are to be "protected," therefore questioning their place in the military. This divides men and women back into their traditional gender roles, showing that the gender norms of the past have not fully faded from modern society.<sup>107</sup>

The concern of female sexuality as a hindrance to military performance is still used as justification to bar women from advancement. Lieutenant General Jerry Boykin, former commander of the Green Berets and original member of the Delta Force, wrote an article for CNN sharing his opinions on women in combat. He labels the addition of women as "a dangerous experiment." Interestingly, his concerns sound strangely familiar. He argues, "This combat environment--now containing males and females--will place a tremendous burden on combat commanders. Not only will they have to maintain their focus on defeating the enemy in battle, they will have to do so in an environment that combines life-threatening danger with underlying sexual tensions." Boykin illustrates that fears of the effects of female sexuality within the military context are still quite present in public discourse concerning female soldiers. Boykin claims that the female body will become a distraction that would interfere with the efficacy of the military, an exact fear from World War II. His comment also frames women as the other or the party at fault in this situation. He assumes that sexual tension is a direct result from the presence of women. Not once does he consider that men also contribute to sexual tension, let

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<sup>107</sup>Robert Knight, "Deceitful Debate Over Women in Combat," *The Washington Times*, November 30, 2013, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/nov/30/deceitful-debate-over-women-in-combat/?page=all> (accessed February 15, 2014).

alone the possibilities of homosexual attractions between the ranks. He reduces the problem down to female sexuality and uses it as justification for barring women from military positions.<sup>108</sup>

One can draw clear parallels between today's fears and the concerns of the past. Even though women have come a long way since World War II, achieving full integration and now the forthcoming available combat positions, women still face the similar restrictions based on sex and public criticism for breaking them. As the future unfolds and women gain more military prominence, women still walk a tightrope between military advancement and archaic expectations dictating that they need to be "protected." The dual gender expectations the military held for its servicewomen in World War II that servicewomen retain their femininity while still meshing effortlessly into a masculine context still echo in today's discourse about women in the military and begs the question of what will come next for women in the American military.

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<sup>108</sup>Jerry Boykin, "Women in Combat, A Dangerous Experiment," *CNN*, January 26, 2013, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/01/25/opinion/boykin-women-in-combat/> (accessed February 15, 2014).



## Appendix

"Okay, Soldier,

**I'LL TAKE OVER!"**

SWEET WORDS to many a red-blooded soldier who inches for his chance to fight! What man wants to sit at a desk when there are planes to fly . . . tanks that could be tearing toward Victory . . . machine guns waiting for a steady hand and a cold bead on Japs and Nazis!

Perhaps you, in the uniform of a WAAC, soon will be saying, "Okay, soldier, I'll take over!"

In an army of millions, many thousands of men are doing administrative or supply duties who could be fighting beside their companions—hastening Victory for all! And they will be!

For the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps is training 150,000 women as quickly as possible to take over many kinds of duties—from typing to aerial photography—which women can do, and are doing successfully, so that trained troops can get into battle. For military reasons, civilians cannot be used. The "Women's Army" must do the job if we are to win without needless bloodshed.

*Isn't this where your place is?*

If you have children under 14, or other dependents, your place is at home. If you are giving all you've got to a job in a war industry, you are vital to Victory there. Otherwise, isn't it time you considered your part in this world aflame?

Incidentally, you'll like life in the WAAC. You'll find training fun as well as beneficial . . . you'll be well cared for, with fine uniforms and full equipment and excellent food . . . you'll enjoy warm, interesting friendships . . . travel . . . and learn much that will be valuable later.

But the big thing is—you'll be doing something important to bring peace again to your loved ones. No matter what your duties in the WAAC—whether you become a driver of a jeep, a radio technician, or an administrative specialist—you are making an important contribution. The Army needs you. Visit your nearest U. S. Army Recruiting and Induction Station immediately!



**WOMEN'S ARMY AUXILIARY CORPS**

**U. S. ARMY**

RECRUITING AND  
INDUCTION SERVICE

**Figure 1:** United States Army, "Okay, Soldier I'll Take Over," recruitment advertisement, *Ladies' Home Journal*, May 1943, 165.



**To the Ladies**

These gallant young women are dedicated to the service of our country. WAVE, WAC, SPAR, Marine, Cadet Nurse—they know that every ounce of work and loyalty is urgently needed now. They and millions of other Americans are putting all their hearts and energies into the fight for Victory. To them, Canada Dry, “the Champagne of Ginger Ales,” an old family friend, says: Keep up the good work!

**CANADA DRY** WORLD FAMOUS

*“The Champagne of Ginger Ales”*

Just as soon as conditions permit, we hope to be able to fully meet the ever-increasing demand for Canada Dry Ginger Ale...and again make “The Champagne of Ginger Ales” available to you in the handy 5¢ individual bottle.

SO DELICIOUS, SO PURE.  
SO REFRESHING...  
ENJOYED THE WORLD OVER!

**Figure 2:** Canada Dry, “To the Ladies!” advertisement, *Collier’s Weekly*, December 9, 1944, 27.



# *This is the Life...* AND I LOVE IT!

 If you had told me four weeks ago that I'd really *enjoy* Army life, I'd have said you were crazy. It wasn't for fun that I joined. You know the reason—you've felt it yourself—a deep need to *do* something about this war, a feeling I had to give in to before I could find peace of mind.

The WAAC is an outlet for that feeling, and it's a good deal more. Frankly, it's the most fun I've had in years. There's a grand group here at the training center—interesting, lively women from all over—Sally from Boston, Jane from St. Louis, young Joan from Georgia. Already I've made friendships I mean to cling to through life. There's something about every one of them—a light in their eyes and an unspoken sense of purpose that—well, it's fine.

When we step out in close order drill (yes, once I thought it would be tough but it isn't) we move

together—right on the beat. My squad's the best in the company! We're kept busy and we're learning a lot, but it isn't all work by any means. The time we have for songs, a coke, or a game of ping-pong seems all the more precious because—like soldiers—we came here bent on serious duty. And like a company of soldiers, there never was a team or a club with more to share.

In another week our basic training will be over. Then some will go on to specialists' schools like Motor Transport or Aerial Photography or Bakers & Cooks . . . the best will go into Officer Candidate School immediately and others later as we prove up. Companies will be formed and sent into the field, taking over from soldiers who've been biting their nails at desk jobs, and now have their chance to punch Hitler in the nose!

We may go anywhere—Texas, New Jersey, England, Africa, California. If it weren't for the excitement of wondering what comes next, I'd be sorry to leave this place. It's a wonderful experience. Just think what I'll have to tell my grandchildren!

**HOW YOU CAN JOIN THE WAAC**

*You should be a healthy U. S. citizen—age 21 to 44, inclusive—of any race, color, or creed—either married or single, provided you have no dependents or children under 14. High School diploma not necessary. Go now to your nearest U. S. Army Recruiting and Induction Station for full information on how you can help your country. Do it at once—Total War won't wait!*

## Women's Army Auxiliary Corps



**U. S. ARMY** KEEP 'EM FIGHTING!

*Recruiting and Induction Service*

**Figure 3:** Women's Auxiliary Army Corps, "This is the Life...and I Love It!" recruitment advertisement, *Ladies' Home Journal*, April 1943, 179.





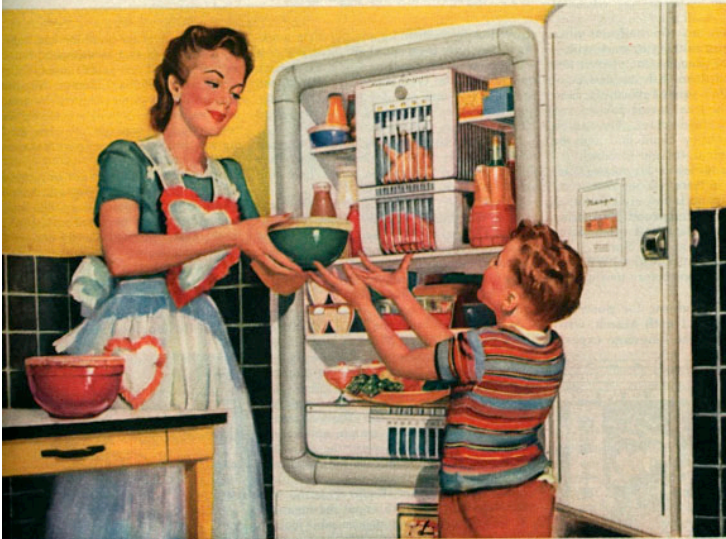
*Working  
for today*

No one group of individuals—military or civilian—is working for victory more wholeheartedly than the WAVES. Now more than 50,000 strong, and accomplishing 246 different types of duty, this splendid branch of our armed forces is still in need of 1,000 volunteers a week! Married or unmarried women between 20 and 36 are urged to investigate . . . there's no greater act of patriotism than releasing a man for combat by taking his place—in the uniform of a WAVE!

# NORGE

## HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES

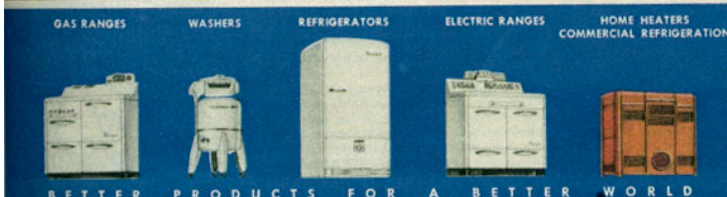
*Planning  
for  
tomorrow*



Like the WAVES, Norge is wholeheartedly occupied in winning the war. The Norge factories are turning out more than forty vitally important war items. . . . Meanwhile, Norge appliances are doing their part by conserving and preserving foods, lightening household tasks, saving time and adding generally to the efficiency of war-busy families. And Norge is planning for tomorrow—planning new household helps which, because of the new skills and techniques developed as the result of war assignments, of a certainty will be better designed, better engineered, better built. The postwar Norge refrigerators and the Norge washers, ranges and home heaters will be real *products of experience*—better products for a better world.

### NORGE, A BORG-WARNER INDUSTRY

Norge is the trade-mark of Norge Division, Borg-Warner Corporation, Detroit 26, Michigan. In Canada—Addison Industries, Limited, Toronto, Ontario



BETTER PRODUCTS FOR A BETTER WORLD

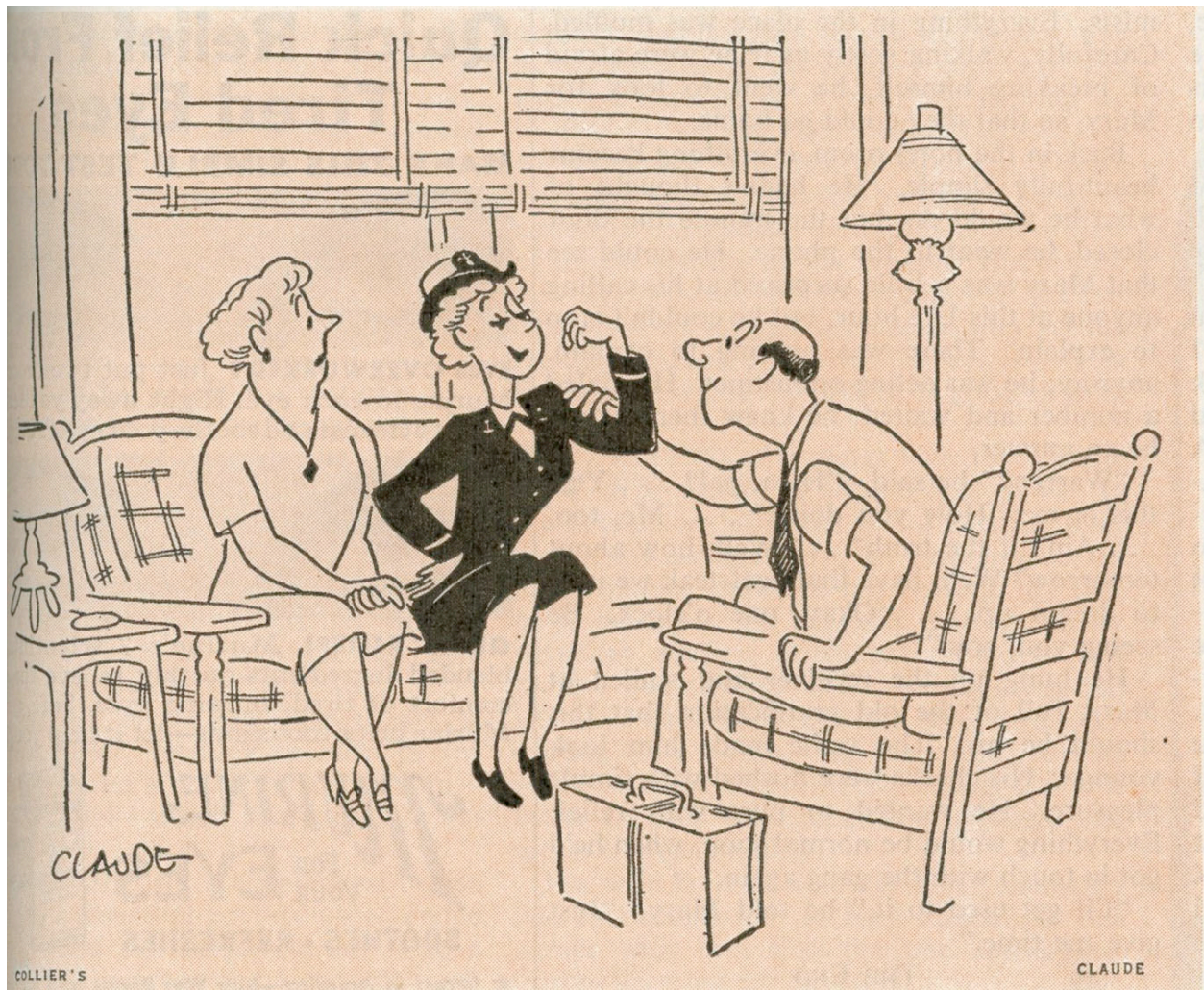


When it's over — see Norge  
before you buy...meanwhile  
**BUY MORE WAR BONDS**

NATIONAL APPLIANCE CONSERVATION PROGRAM  
"BETTER CARE—LESS REPAIR"

**Figure 4:** Norge Household Appliances, "Working for Today, Planning for Tomorrow," advertisement, *Collier's Weekly*, August 19, 1944, 71.





**Figure 5:** Claude, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, November 25, 1944, 75.





**Figure 6:** R.C. Dell, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, April 17, 1943, 73.



**Figure 7:** Example of WAAC uniform. Women's Army Corps, *A Book of Facts About the WAC*, (Washington DC: United States Army, 1944), 10.



## \$200 worth of clothes free!

It's a proud moment when you first step out in brand new Navy blues! The trim uniform was especially designed by the famous stylist Mainbocher to flatter every figure and make you look—and feel—your best!

When you arrive at training school as an enlisted WAVE or SPAR, you will be provided with an allowance of \$200 for uniforms and other clothing. The official uniform consists of "everything that shows," except shoes and gloves. The cost—about \$160—is paid from the \$200 allowance. The balance of about \$40 is given you for shoes, underclothing and anything else you may need.

The uniform for the WAVES and the SPARS is the same except for the lapel insignia and hat band. It consists of the following articles:

- Soft crowned hat, rolled brim, black band.
- Short, Navy blue jacket, slightly built-up shoulders, new rounded collar and pointed lapel. Blue and white insignia for WAVES and gold for SPARS.
- Flattering, six-gored skirt.
- Reserve blue and dark blue shirts.
- Black seaman's tie.
- Smart, over-the-shoulder, leather pouch bag (Optional).
- White gloves in summer, black in winter.
- Beige fisher hood.
- Black oxfords, heels not over 1½ inches.



- Raincoat and havelock (rainhat), becoming protection for bad weather.

**Figure 8:** Example of a WAVE uniform. United States Navy, *How to Serve Your Country in the WAVES or the SPARS* (Washington DC: United States Navy, 1943), 8.





**Figure 9:** Example of a SPAR uniform. United States Coast Guard, *Facts About Spars* (Washington DC: U.S. Coast Guard, 1943), 9.



**Figure 10:** Example of a female Marine uniform. “Women Marines,” *Life*, March 27, 1944, 81.



With women in the Service...

# First in Fashion

Khaki, blue, or forest green...  
whatever you wear...you'll find the cigarette for  
milder smoking pleasure is

# Camel

**WACS**—Maybe you learn to chauffeur a jeep and release a soldier to drive a tank; maybe you learn radio and free a radio man to fly—and fight! But whatever you do as a WAC, you'll be doing your "bit" in a big way. And, by the time you've finished training, you'll know your Army...from khaki to Camels—the service favorite.

**WAVES**—You get up at "reveille," go to bed at "taps." You call the floor of your quarters "the deck" and the walls "bulkheads." Because when you're in the WAVES, you're in the Navy. And, if you smoke, you'll quickly learn the Navy favorite is the cigarette with that famous flavor—Camel.

**SPARS**—You may not get to sea, but that job you take over at a deck means another Coast Guardsman free to fight on deck! And, if your smoking tastes run to the full flavor of costlier tobaccos and the extra mildness of slow burning, you'll be smoking Camels—the Coast Guard favorite.

**THE "T-ZONE."** How long since you've smoked a Camel? Give them a try today. Compare them critically... for taste... for your throat... for your "T-Zone." That's the proving ground of any cigarette. On the basis of the experience of millions of steady Camel smokers, we believe you will like the extra flavor that only Camel's blend of costlier tobaccos can give. We believe your throat will confirm the findings of other Camel smokers. Try Camels. See if they don't suit your "T-Zone" to a "T."

**First IN THE SERVICE**

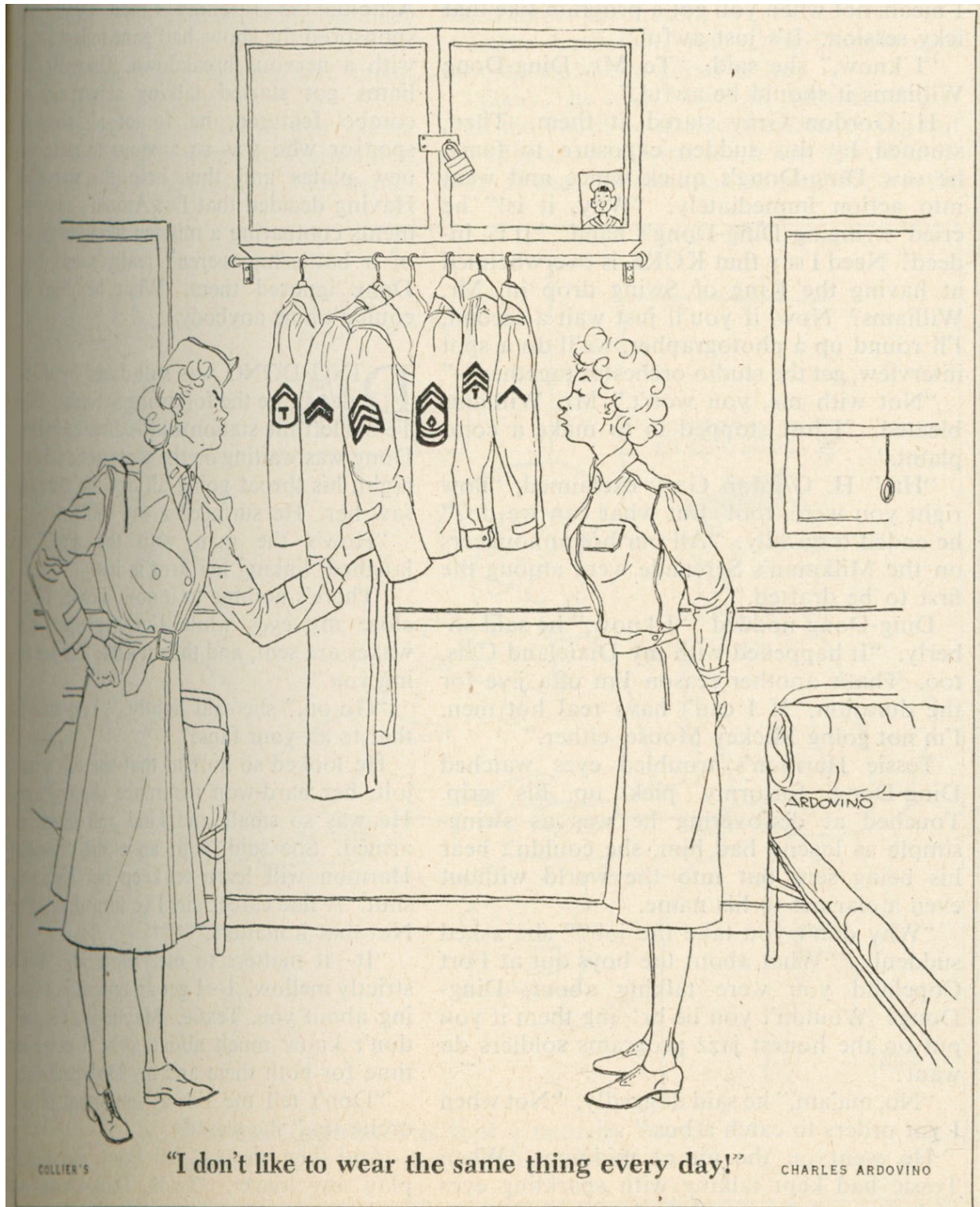
Actual sales records show the favorite cigarette with smokers in the Army, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard is Camel.

R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO COMPANY  
WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

**"BE A MARINE"**—free a Marine to fight" is the motto of the Marine Corps Women's Reserve. Their forest green uniform, above, is by government issue, the cigarette by Camel; and that means the smoking situation is "well in hand" as your own taste and throat will tell you when you make Camel your cigarette.

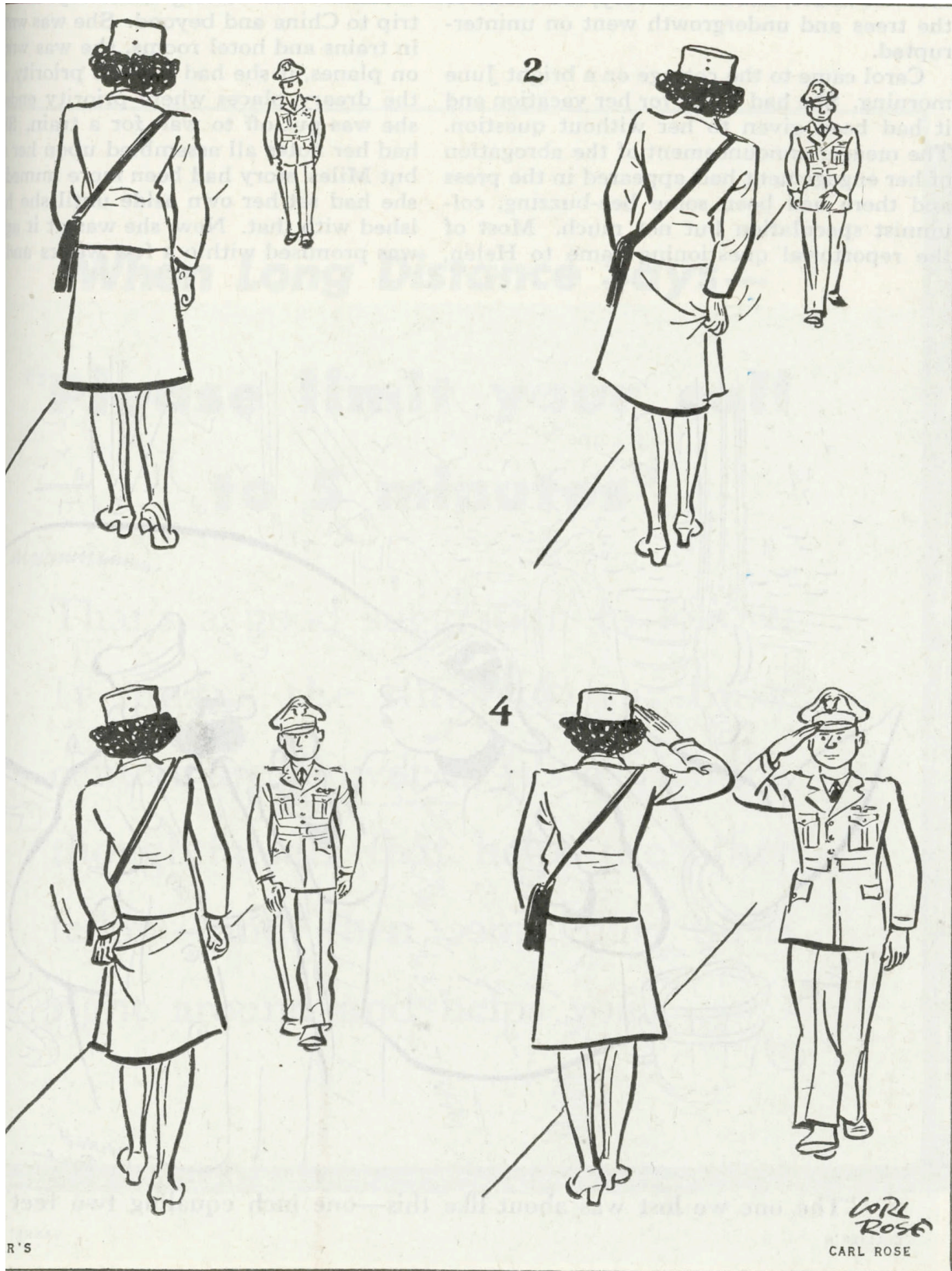
**Figure 11:** Camel Cigarettes, "First in Fashion," advertisement, *Collier's Weekly*, October 30, 1943, back cover.





**Figure 12:** Charles Adorino, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, August 12, 1944, 61.





**Figure 13:** Carl Rose, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, June 10, 1944, 33.





**Figure 14:** Sergeant Douglas Borgstedt, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, September 25, 1943, 56.



**Figure 15:** Corporal Vic Herman, "Winnie the Wac," *Life*, March 19, 1945, 12.



**LIGHTER MOMENTS** with  
**fresh Eveready Batteries**  
**DATED**

MICHAEL BERRY

**"Now There's One Sergeant Who Commands Attention and Gets It!"**

Keep your eye on the Infantry...the dough-boy does it! They fight for your postwar future. You save for it. Buy War Bonds!

A word on behalf of your dealer. He can't supply you with enough "Eveready" flashlight batteries because of urgent war needs. Nearly our entire production of these dependable, long-service batteries must go to the armed forces and essential war industry.

But your dealer promises you all the "Eveready" batteries you want after victory. And we, in turn, promise that these batteries will be even better than before, even more dependable.

**Fresh DATED BATTERIES Last Longer**  
 Look for the date line

**EVEREADY**  
 TRADE MARK

The word "Eveready" is a registered trade-mark of National Carbon Company, Inc.

Figure 16: Everyday Batteries, advertisement, *Collier's Weekly*, June 30, 1945, 49.



A recent portrait of  
Constance Luft Huhn,  
Head of the House of Tangee

## WE ARE STILL THE WEAKER SEX

by CONSTANCE LUFT HUHN, Head of the House of Tangee

MANY OF US may be serving shoulder to shoulder with America's fighting men—but we're still the weaker sex... It's still up to us to appear as alluring and lovely as possible.

So remember, ask for the aids to beauty made by THE HOUSE OF TANGEE—TANGEE Petal-Finish Face Powder and Rouge and Satin-Finish Lipstick. You'll find you were never lovelier!

Whether you're in or out of uniform, you'll want to be completely appealing and feminine—you'll want delightful satin-smooth lips and all the glamour of a silky, petal-smooth complexion.

THE HOUSE OF TANGEE has created just what you need to keep you as lovely as you should be. For your lips, we have world-famous TANGEE Satin-Finish Lipsticks to give your lips long-lasting satiny smoothness. And with TANGEE Petal-Finish Rouge and the extraordinary new TANGEE Petal-Finish Face Powder, your complexion will take on a silky, radiant petal-smoothness that clings for many extra hours!

*Satin-Finish Your Lips... Petal-Finish Your Complexion*

# TANGEE

SAMMY KAYE IS ON THE AIR IN TANGEE SERENADE... Listen Every Sunday at 1:30 P. M. (EWT) Coast-to-Coast... Blue Network

**Figure 17:** Tangee Lipsticks, advertisement, *Ladies' Home Journal*, September 1944, 122.



**Figure 18:** George Shellhase, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, December 18, 1943, 82.





**Figure 19:** Frank Brandt, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, August 19, 1944, 75.





**Figure 20:** Fritz Wilkinson, comic, *Collier's Weekly*, July 25, 1942, 26.



**Figure 21:** John Phillip Falter, “Proud- I’ll Say,” recruitment poster, (Washington DC: United States Navy, 1943). Library of Congress.





**Figure 22:** Vignettes from Al Parker, "This Woman's Army," *The Saturday Evening Post*, January 8, 1944, 26-27.

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